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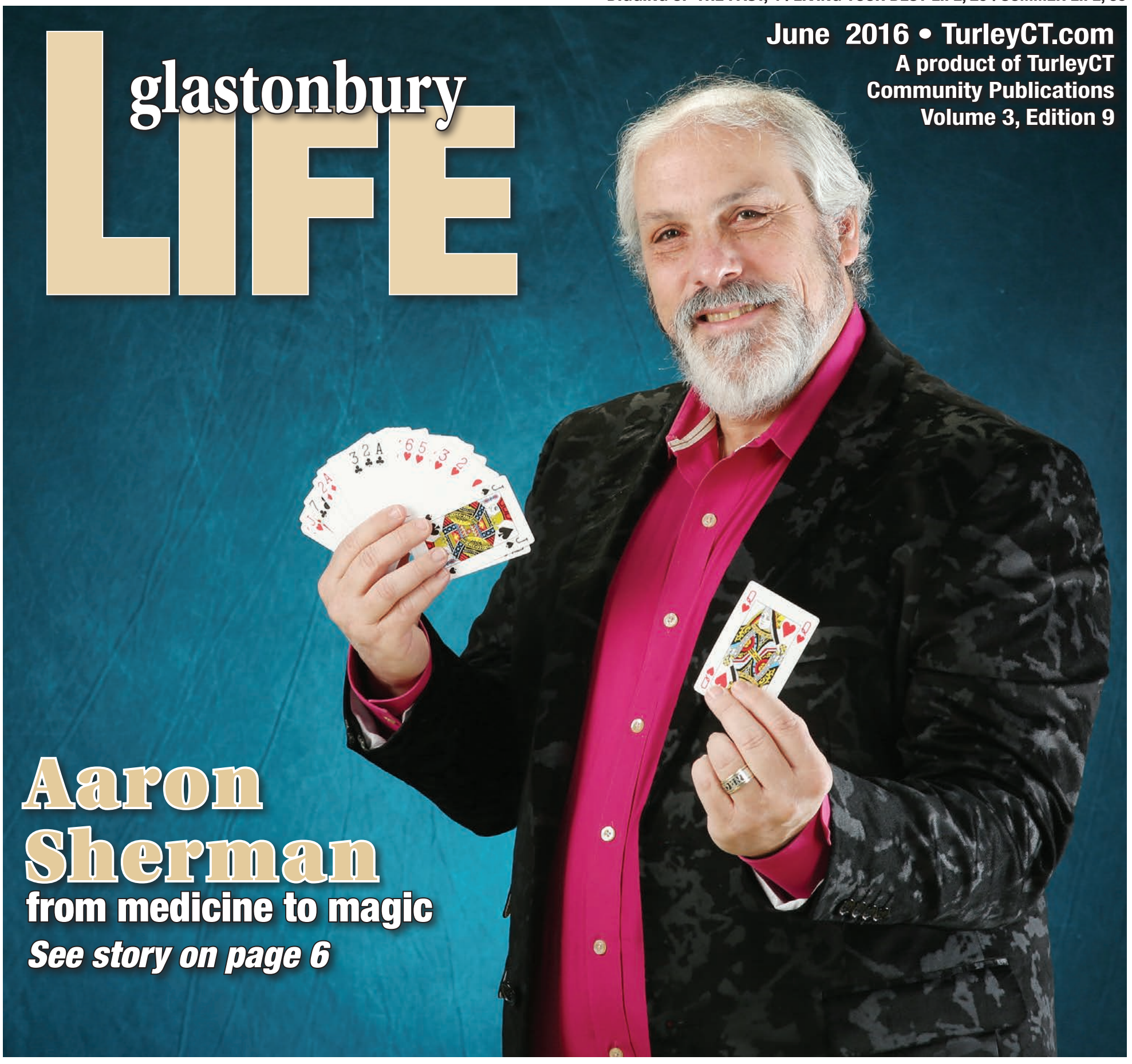

Aaron Sherman
from medicine to magic

See story on page 6

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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"I don't keep a travel bucket list anymore. I used to, then I got into an ill-conceived gentleman's bet as to whether I could knock them off before I turned 25."

- Ethan Brooks

See story page 16

ON THE COVER

Aaron Sherman, a retired physician, performs magic as Aaron Kehdabra.

Photo by Brian Ambrose
See story page 6

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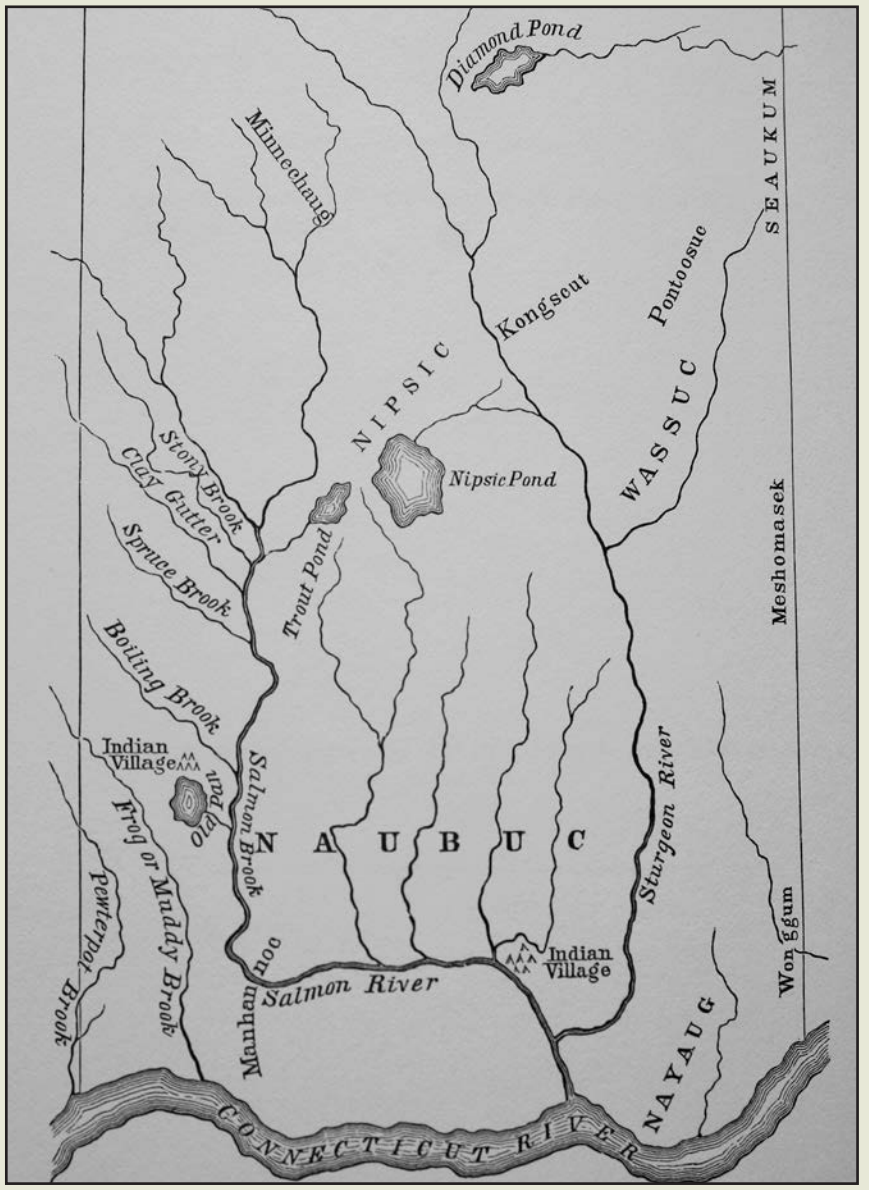

Above Left: These arrowheads and other stone tools are part of a display at the historical society's museum. **Above Right:** This map shows where the various Native American tribes lived in town.

Digging up the past

Town's soil holds evidence of early people

by Nancy Thompson
Editor

Have you ever wondered about the Nayaugs, the Naubucs, the Nipsics or the Wongonks? Have you thought about where the Meshomashic State Forest or Minnechaug Golf Course got their names? How about Stockade Road and Red Hill?

It's taken a bit of digging over the years, but amateur and professional archaeologists have been exploring the history of the area's Native Americans through its dirt for many years.

A list of Native American tribes in Glastonbury and neighboring towns includes the Minnechaugs, Naubucs, Wassucs, Nipsics, Wonggums, Hoccanums, Skunkscuts and Meshomaseks, among others.

Minnechaug, in the northeast part of town, near what is now Manchester, means "berry land." It's believed that Skunkscut, or Kongscut, in the eastern part of town refers to wild geese in the area, and Meshomasek refers to an abundance of rattlesnakes, a name that is appropriate today.

The Naubuc people are believed to have lived in the flat area toward the north end of town, and the Nayaugs, also known as "Red Hill Indians," lived along the Connecticut River in South Glastonbury, from the Red Hill area to the south near High Street, at the mouth of Roaring Brook. The Wongonks lived near along the river where the town hall stands today.

They were peaceful farmers who lived along the river in longhouses and moved to the shelter of caves in the town's upland areas.

Several digs have been recorded in the past 100 years, during which hundreds of artifacts have been uncovered.

The digs include two in the 1920s. The first, in 1923, revealed an old Dutch pipe found among the remains of a burial site in the Red Hill area. The second, in 1929, led to the discovery of what is believed to be the inland winter home of 3,000 to 4,000 people in an area of more than 20 acres.

The devastating floods that hit the area in 1936 and 1938 had one positive effect, revealing many artifacts when the land along the river eroded, with as many as 500 found in one pile near Ferry Lane.

A 1957 archaeological dig in a cave on Kongscut Mountain in the east part of town revealed about 450 artifacts, including arrowheads and pottery shards, some of which are believed to be more than 1,000 years old. It has been described as "one of the most significant discoveries ever."

Other artifacts include three intact skeletons found in the Meadow Hill area of South Glastonbury in 1965 and estimated to be 500 to 1,000 years old. The skeletons appear to be of a middle-aged woman 600 to 700 years ago and two men, 350 to 400 years ago. The skeletons were found in the customary burial position, hands folded against the face, knees drawn up, on its side and facing the rising sun.

In 1971, a bulldozer operator preparing land for development on Meadow Hill noticed what turned out to be a skull. The skull was tinted green, apparently from copper salts in ornamental beads that had been buried with the skeleton. Researchers found other skulls and bones in nearby graves.

Another accidental discovery, this time in 1975, took place on a farm on Main Street when a sewer line construction project led to the excavation of charred tools and what was believed to be cremated remains more than 3,500 years old.

The most recent dig took place a

Photos by Nancy Thompson

Above Left: Native Americans used soapstone to make bowls such as those pictured here.
Above Right: A large display at the historical society's museum features several artifacts recovered from archaeological digs over the years.

couple of years ago, led by Brian Jones, the state archaeologist and a Glastonbury resident. Like some others, the first clue that the earth had secrets to tell came during a construction project, when a bulldozer operator discovered a circle of scorched earth on property owned by Howard Horton.

Jones and others spent several months at the site, which included a fire pit believed to be more than 4,000 years old.

The museum of the Historical Society of Glastonbury has several artifacts on display, including arrowheads and soapstone bowls. The exhibit also features a model of a longhouse, similar to the dwelling used by Native American clans in the summer months many years ago. **GL**

The historical society museum, at the corner of Main and Hubbard streets, is open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on the third Sunday of each month from 1-4 p.m. There is no admission charge. To learn more, visit hsg.org or call 860-633-6890.

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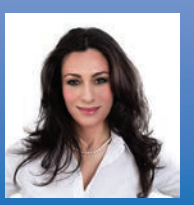

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Magic maker

Physician has alter ego

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Photo by Brian Ambrose

Aaron Sherman

Most people would agree that practicing medicine is a combination of art and science. But magic? Maybe not so much.

It's all in a day's work, though, for Aaron Sherman.

Sherman, who performs under the stage name Aaron Kehdabra Magicmakers, worked for 25 years as an obstetrician/gynecologist with a specialty in infertility.

"At 25 years I decided to pursue other things," he said. "I had enough waking up at night to deliver babies. After I retired from that, I went to New York and worked as a full-time magician for a few years."

He was living in Danbury when he met Tami Cherdack, cantor of Congregation Kol Haverim. He moved to Glastonbury more than two years ago.

In addition to his magic, he also is the senior medical director for medical claims review for UnitedHealthcare.

"I started this job just to augment. I have a young son, he's 10. To make a good living [with magic], I was having to travel too much. With cruise ships you have to be away for months at a time and I didn't want to be away from my boy. Travel was the main reason I picked up a second business," he said.

Sherman's been practicing magic for years, but when exactly he became interested is a matter of debate in his family.

"There are two different stories. There's the story I tell and there's the story my cousins tell. My cousins tell me that I was performing magic when I was five or six years old," said Sherman, who grew up in the Boston area.

He said he got interested considerably later.

"When I got to college, financial aid wasn't as easily available back

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then, and as a result, I needed to make some money that didn't interfere with my ability to study. I got a job at Ground Round as a clown," he related.

He went into a magic shop one day and was told that he'd make more money in tips if he knew a few magic tricks. He took that to heart and began learning magic, eventually doing strolling magic tricks as well as working at other restaurants.

"I very quickly became adept at different types of magic," he said. "I started performing stage magic about 15 years ago, mostly because I thought it would be fun to build a couple of illusions and put them into shows."

And while most of our doctors don't say "abracadabra" along with "open wide," Sherman said it's really not that unusual for doctors to have side careers as performers.

"You'll find in the medical profession there are a number of doctors that prefer different types of arts. They play in bands, they sing in choruses, there are some that do magic. They seem to like to do things that are creative," he said, including someone he knew who left medical school to be a full-time magician.

Sherman enjoyed busking on the streets of Boston, doing sleight-of-hand tricks.

"Practice to me doesn't necessarily mean I learn how to do it right, it means I learn to never do it wrong."

–Aaron Sherman

"I really enjoyed the performances, but as I got older, I did less of that and more of parlor magic which has a bit of sleight of hand," he said. "As I had children I started to become interested in children's magic. Between libraries and birthdays and camps, I was doing as many as 200 shows a year, just for children."

Over the last decade, his interest has shifted again, this time more toward mentalism.

He also does some mentalism, or what appears to be mind reading. I don't read minds; I'm not a psychic," he said. "I can use my intuition and five senses to make people think I'm psychic."

He also teaches magic to children and is the exclusive area licensee for Discover Magic, which is a program to teach magic and life skills.

"It really teaches confidence more than anything else, public speaking, how to work with others," he said.

Some of his school and library shows have an educational message mixed in, such as reading, anti-bullying, recycling or science.

He practices at least two hours a day for his shows. He has performed at Fenway Park, on cruise ships, and in comedy clubs and theaters in New York.

He's working with his wife on a new show, which they hope will debut next year.

"The props are made and we're rehearsing," he said. "we're hiring dancers and writing music. There's a lot of production to do a stage show. There's so much interest in magic. I want people to walk into my show and say, 'I've never seen that before.'"

He wouldn't reveal much about the new show.

"She's a trained opera singer and I'm a magician, so it's going to combine music and magic. The illusions will all have a direct relationship to the arts," he said.

Although it's not in her usual work, Cherdack Sherman is enjoying working with her husband on the show.

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Aaron Sherman, also known as Aaron Kehdabra, often performs with his wife, Tami Cherdack Sherman.

"Anyone would love working with Aaron. He is so creative and his excitement really rubs off on you. There is always something new and interesting in the field to incorporate in a new way. I love to see the audience react to his work with true astonishment. It's so fun and a wonderful way to enjoy life. We love working with each other and adding to our collective life experience. We feel so genuinely lucky to have found each other and our friends, audiences and congregants have all enjoyed our collaboration. When we organize and plan any event together, there is such enthusiasm around it that it's often standing room only. Every day holds some fabulous surprise in store when you live with a magician. Life has truly become a magical adventure," she said. Cherdack Sherman first saw Sherman perform in 2012.

"I was struck by how unique and surprising his shows are. They are perfectly tailored to the occasion, and he has illusions and items created just for that particular person or theme. The shows contain things you have never seen before and are uniquely his. He is a great magician and mentalist because he can read his audience well. He knows people well and can tailor his shows to the audience members right on the spot. The shows are wonderfully interactive and exciting because of this and because of the love he has for the craft. He truly loves all things magical and it shows. His shows are a labor of love and he is constantly changing and improving his act with new exciting ideas. He lives and breathes magic every day," she said. "Aaron's parlor and stage performance is exciting because of his unique approach. Each trick and illusion is infused with his own personality and everything seems like the audience is seeing it for the first time, even when he performs classical magic tricks. The twists he adds to older props and the illusions he has made exclusively for his performances make his magic more of an experience and less of a show. Aaron shines especially when performing mental magic. His intuition and

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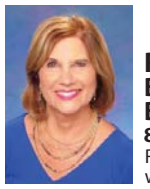

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GLASTONBURY: 4BR/4.1BA Col. One of a kind spacious home on private lot w/ winter views of Diamond Lake. Granite kit, 3 fp, central vac & skylights. Wing w/ sep entrance & bath could be in-law or office. Fin lower level. Diamond Lake privileges-swim, canoe, fish! **$395,000 Julia-Rosner.com 860-508-3636**

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MARLBOROUGH Meticulous 4BR/2.1BA Col. Kitchen w/quartz counters, 10'island w/Jenn Aire 6-burner cooktop. Sun rm w/6 skylights, Lopi wood stove in FR w/vaulted ceil & 8'L-shaped bar. Formal DR & LR w/fp. Circular flr plan on main level. Multi-level deck. **$339,900**
JamieRBell.com 860-604-8459

PORTLAND Glastonbury Line - 3BR/3.1BA remodl'd CT River front home w/gourmet kitchen & granite counters, large island, SS appl's & walk-in pantry. Open floor plan, LR & DR w/aprox 24'of sliders, spacious deck, FR exits to screened in porch. A rare find! **$734,900 JodySmaglis.com 860-573-2090**

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PORTLAND: 4BR/2.1BA Col. Hardwood throughout house. Private backyard. Close to schools, library & shopping. Sunroom w/ heat and could be used year round. This would add more square footage. 1st floor laundry is a separate mudroom. House offers generous rooms! **$268,000 LindaGurtel.com 860-543-1544**

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Photo by Brian Ambrose

ability to discern information one would think it impossible for him to know is a product of his understanding of people. I am still amazed at some of the things he correctly 'reads' from his volunteers. It is easy to see why they really believe he is reading their minds."

Despite all his experience, not every trick completely lands. He jokes that his favorite part of the act is "when it works."

He said it's okay when it doesn't. "Mentalism doesn't always have to work. Audiences should have the expectation that the mentalist is using all the same senses we have and not that they have some psychic, John Edwards ability. I don't have an issue with something failing," he said. "Mentalism is an art. It's partly psychology; partly knowing people, how they look, how they react; it's partly relationship-forming. I've been out in the world. As a physician it gives me an advantage in a way. It lets me know who has certain reactions. Certain gestures gives me information."

He sometimes takes his magic to the street, such as on a trip to California, where he headed out to Huntington Pier.

"Just to interact with people to see what they like and what they didn't like, to learn their reactions and get better at what I do on a regular basis, and it was fun," he said. "Practice to me doesn't necessarily mean I learn how to do it right, it means I learn to never do it wrong. I don't ever debut an act until it's failproof. It's obviously important when I'm levitating my wife because I don't want to break her."

He said that while there are television shows that reveal how certain tricks are done, the mechanics of a trick aren't necessarily the only part.

"Magic is primarily about performance. Mentalism is not 100 percent. You're working with a lot of cold readings. It doesn't always work, but the style, the personality, the bonding is what makes it exciting. TV shows reveal methods. ... The magic is the performer, what they do, how they entertain, the relationship they form with their audience," Sherman said. "I like interacting with people. That's part of why I like mentalism so much. There's a certain bonding with a group of people you're meeting."

He went to a show in Springfield, Mass., where the magician used Sherman's tricks, even his jokes. But it still wasn't the same as seeing Sherman in motion.

"A lot of magic is redundant. You'll never see it done the way I do it. The beauty of magic as a performing art is the uniqueness of the performer. I try to be unique. I try to make it so if you saw me today and saw me again tomorrow, you wouldn't be bored," he said. "What drives me is I love entertaining people. The motivation is to have them thoroughly entertained in a way they haven't experienced before. My work has to be unique. It can't be somebody else."

And while he sees no connection between his current two careers, Sherman does find a link to his days as an obstetrician.

"I delivered babies; there's definitely magic there." **GL**

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Local club promotes lacrosse for all

Sponsors activities for kindergarten children through masters

by Nancy Thompson
Editor

The Glastonbury Lacrosse Club traces its origins to a religious rite.

Nearly 40 years ago, Chris Cooper and John McMahon were about to be confirmed in their church, an occasion that often comes with gifts.

Both boys asked for lacrosse sticks, and out of those requests, a community tradition was born.

The two encouraged their friends to get sticks and eventually had enough guys to play games without goals or a lined field, said Joe Cooper, Chris Cooper's son.

Courtesy photo

Coach Andrew Lee talks with his players about the history of lacrosse

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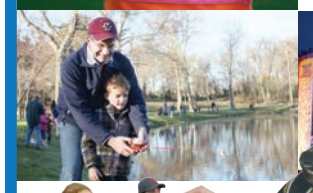

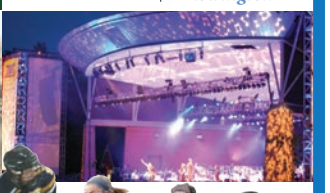

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The recent success of our Glastonbury High School boys and girls lacrosse programs is a direct result of thousands of hours of [club] parents volunteering their time and passion for the sport."

–Annette Larabee

The youths teamed up with Steve Hinchey, a local dentist who had played lacrosse at Fairfield University, who agreed to be their coach.

Hinchey took the team, which Joe Cooper described as a "rag-tag group," to West Hartford for a game where they saw goals and a lined field for the first time. They not only won that game, but they went on to win all their games that season and become league champions.

"It truly was a remarkable and unique start to the Glastonbury lacrosse program," he said.

When that group of local players reached Glastonbury High School, they formed a club team that led to lacrosse becoming a varsity sport a few years later. Two years ago, Scott Hinchey, the son of the man who helped the group get off the ground a generation before, was named coach of the varsity team.

The club promotes lacrosse at all levels.

Seth Jacoby, who served on the board of the lacrosse club for several years, helped start the club's Rising Stars program in 2007 to introduce the fundamental skills of the game to children in first and second grade.

The club holds free clinics to introduce the game to new players and spent nearly $100,000 a year ago to upgrade the field at Buttonball Lane Elementary School.

The group also runs a tournament known as LAXFEST every May at the high school for teams with players in third through eighth grade and the Glastonbury Lacrosse Tournament during the summer that attracts about 30 teams with players of college age and older, some professionals, in three divisions. This year's tournament will include a new "Masters Grey Division" for players 35 and older.

The club also offers scholarships to graduating seniors who participated in youth lacrosse and played at the high school level for at least two years.

Annette and Jonathan Larabee have three sons who have played for the club. Austin, a junior, plays on the varsity team at Glastonbury High School; Nathan, an eighth-grader, plays on the club's senior boys AA team; and 9-year-old Dylan plays at the club's bantam level. Austin and Nathan started playing lacrosse in first grade, while Dylan started in kindergarten.

Annette Larabee said she likes the fact that the club is local, volunteer and nonprofit, with local parents volunteering as coaches.

"From a convenience standpoint, it's a home run," she said. "They have a long history in the town and have grown over the years as the sport has gained in popularity."

She said she has been impressed with the way the club has adapted to the sport's growth.

"They have so many offerings now that did not exist a few years ago," she said. "Lacrosse has always been a springtime sport, but now they offer fall lacrosse clinics and leagues, which are less intensive, allowing kids to play another sport but still maintain their lacrosse skills. They have winter lacrosse clinics and leagues at Oakwood, again to allow kids to maintain their skills over the winter. And they are constantly improving the springtime program. They completed a first-ever field expansion project at Buttonball School in the fall of 2014. That was a huge accomplishment for the club which benefits the community and will hopefully allow for future growth."

She credits the recent success of the high school lacrosse programs to their time with the club.

"I think GLC is proud of its role in town," she said. "The recent success of our Glastonbury High School boys and girls lacrosse programs is a direct result of thousands of hours of [club] parents volunteering their time and passion for the sport." **GL**

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Kim Reid, pictured with a stuffed friend, is the owner of Pinwheels Toys & Games. She also owns Silver Dahlia.

Photo by Mara Dresner

Fun and games at Pinwheels

Toy store opened by popular gift shop owner

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

As a mother of three – Charlotte, 8; Teddy, 7; and Amelia, 4 – Kim Reid knows a little bit about toys and games.

"I've had Silver Dahlia for about six years. Over the years, I slowly expanded the little children's area," Reid, mother of eight-year-old Charlotte, seven-year-old Teddy and four-year-old Amelia, said of her decision to open Pinwheels Toys & Games. "I kept finding all these little gems at shows, at gift shows, at toy shows. I finally took the plunge and just did the whole store. It was too hard to segment each department of toys and get it into that small little store across the street."

The two stores are right across a parking lot from one another, with Silver Dahlia at 63 Hebron Ave., and Pinwheels, which opened last year, at 41 Hebron Ave.

"There's just so many amazing toys out there that I just don't see at Toys "R" Us," said Reid, who lives in Glastonbury. "It's just sort of a family dream. It really is so much fun to have my children here. They come, they play, and they give us feedback on what are great toys and not such great toys. It's just been a really fun adventure for us."

There's always children's music playing at the store, with kid-sized furniture and various toys available to keep the little ones occupied.

"Our vision is a fun, creative environment where parents and children can come in and play and learn and have fun. We want it to be a warm, welcoming environment. I've been in toy stores in the past with my children where they jump if you touch anything," Reid said. "We do story time and play hours."

She said the store has several items that might not be found elsewhere.

"We have tons of craft lines that are not mainstream, that are amazing toys that come in kits that have everything you need to do the craft. There's a line of stuffed animals, Jelly Cat, that are these beautiful, soft, plush, adorable stuffed animals you don't see mainstream. We love them; they have the cutest [animals]," she said. "[We have] Crazy

Aaron's Thinking Putty. All they make is this 'thinking putty.' It's this mica Silly Putty that never dries out and it's made in the U.S.A. He was sitting at his desk working and needed something to play with. He made a putty, then his coworkers wanted some and he turned it into a business. It's an amazing line; all the kids love it."

Visitors also will find many toys that were popular from decades ago, such as Slinky, Rubik's cubes, jump ropes, and Fisher-Price toys, including the company's rotary telephone, record player and cash register.

"We love the throwbacks," Reid said. "It's nice when parents can come in and go, 'Oh my gosh, do you remember these?' Then they buy it and the kids love it, and it's so much fun."

The store carries several games.

"We do a lot of cooperative games that are more learning for preschoolers, or family challenges so they're all working toward one goal, so it's a team effort. We try to connect fun and learning," said Reid, who has fond memories of playing Candy Land, Parcheesi and dominoes as a child.

"Pinwheels has an amazing selection of current and classic toys, books and games for all ages," said Tracy Bancroft, a town resident and mother of three. "Their staff is incredibly knowledgeable and friendly and helpful, wrapping gifts, finding, even ordering the appropriate toy, interacting with adults and kids. The staff obviously enjoys working there. It's a convenient location and the store itself is very bright, open and cheerful."

She said Brady has been especially impressed with the store.

"[He] even wrote a book about his favorite place being Pinwheels. His quote was, 'There's Pokémon. The store ladies are very nice, and they really want to help you out," Bancroft said.

Pinwheels offers free gift wrapping and will create gift bags for favors for birthday parties or other events.

Reid said it's sometimes challenging to own two stores.

"Well, that's been interesting," she said. "I have amazing managers. Without them, I would never be able to do it all. They treat it like their own and that is an amazing thing to have."

She said the businesses have a lot in common.

"They're pretty similar really. You have to look for hot new toys and for hot new accessories across the street. Here, we can be a little more eventful because it's way more interactive. Across the board, we have amazing customers. This town is an amazing town to live in and do business in. It's so rewarding to be here," she said.

Pinwheels has items for newborns to tweens.

"Boys, girls, crafts, science, puzzles, books, we try to hit every category we can," Reid said. The store also sells greeting cards, balloons and gift wrap.

One thing that you won't find is a lot of technology.

"We don't sell a lot of technology-based [games] where you use you iPad for this and I think our customers really appreciate that. We really focus on quality educational activities," Reid said. "It all comes back to the classics really, board games, crafts, family time, always top of the mark, anything that is wholesome, good quality time seems to be what families are going toward."

The store also does a number of events, including crafts and activities such as a Rubik's cube challenge. Visitors can also try their luck at the store's gumball machine. If you get a golden gumball, you receive a $5 gift card.

"There are a lot of golden gumballs in there," Reid said. "Kids come in with a pocketful of quarters. It's really adorable to watch."

Whether they're coming in to try a new game or just to get a balloon, she has one goal.

"We want them to feel excitement. We want them to feel they can come in and touch and play and truly feel like a child," she said. "It's just to have children come in and feel comfortable to play and feel that they're welcome and they're home." **GL**

Pinwheels Toys & Games is at 41 Hebron Ave. The phone is 860-430-2954 and the website is pinwheelstoys.com.

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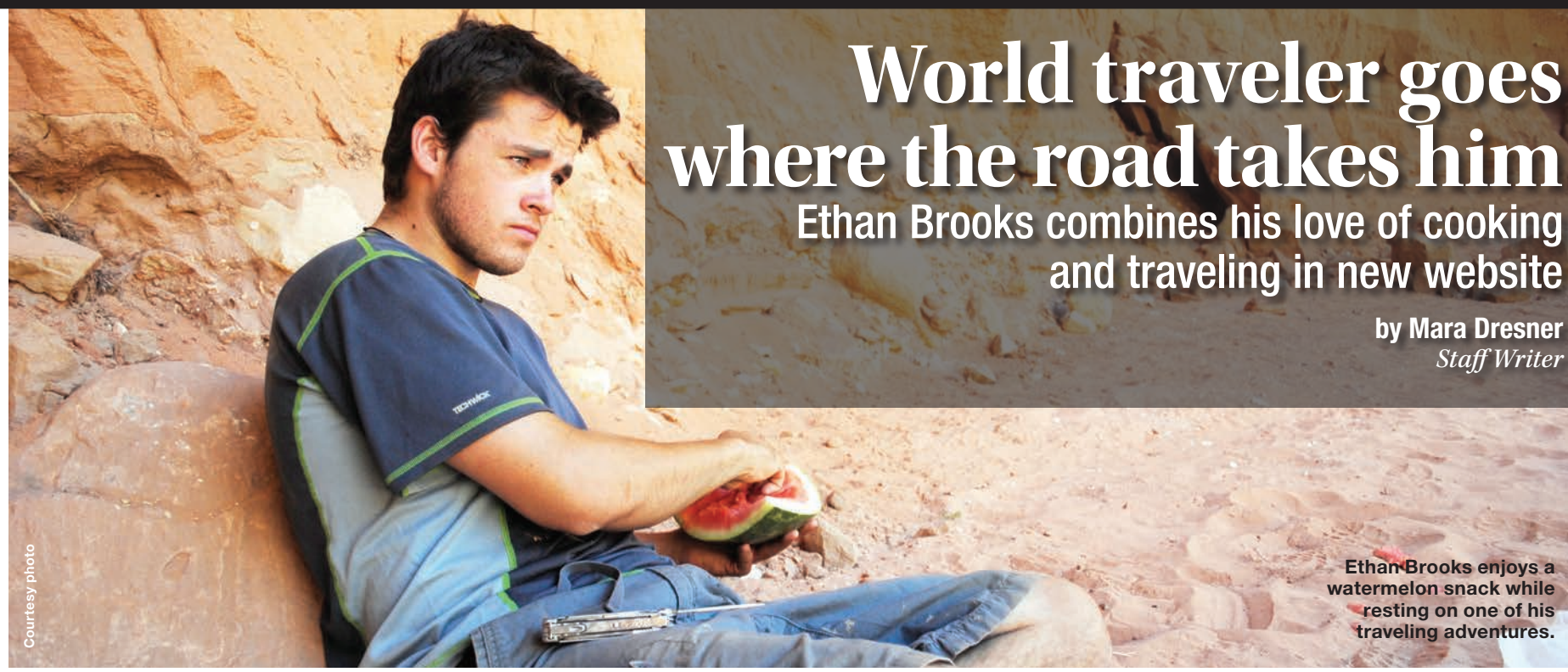

Courtesy photo

Ethan Brooks enjoys a watermelon snack while resting on one of his traveling adventures.

World traveler goes where the road takes him

Ethan Brooks combines his love of cooking and traveling in new website

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

There were no early indications that Ethan Brooks would ever do anything with cooking.

"When I was very young, I learned to make scrambled eggs," he said. "I snuck out of my bedroom early one morning, cranked the stove up to a thousand, and nearly burned the house down. My parents have been early risers ever since. As a teenager, the only thing I remember cooking is a dish my friends and I came up with and called 'E-Dogs.' It was hot dogs on bread with as many other ingredients out of the fridge as possible: ketchup, mayonnaise, pickles, salami, jam. They were pretty awful, and we ate them by the pile."

It wasn't until college that Brooks found his groove in the kitchen.

"I didn't get serious about

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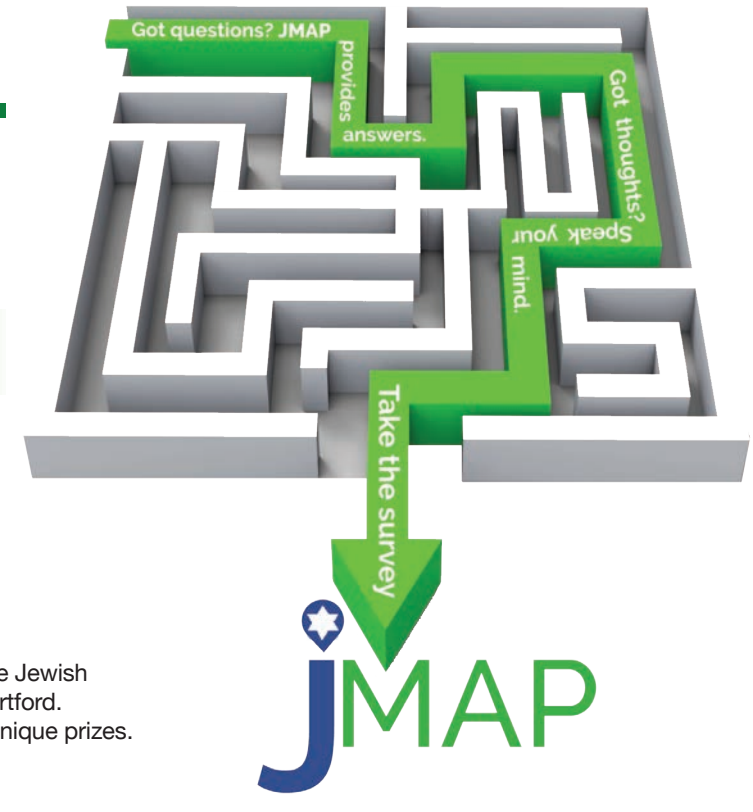

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cooking until I went off to UConn. I rented a little place off-campus and had a single enameled Dutch oven, and about $25 per week food budget. I had a friend who became a minister online so that he could get a discounted membership to a nearby restaurant supply warehouse, and we used to go there and stock up on ingredients in bulk. It was the kind of place where you could buy a palette of lettuce or a drum of soy sauce. As a moving-in present he got me a 50-pound bag of flour," he recalled. "Being hungry there was the first time I really learned to cook to feed myself."

Now Brooks has combined two of his loves – cooking and traveling – in the launch of Cooking Travelers, a website he described as being "for people who explore the world through food."

"There's plenty of information out there for people who enjoy exploring exotic restaurants. But until now there hasn't really been a hub for people who see cooking as an integral part of their travel experience," he said. "I'm trying to build that by teaching the techniques I learn while exploring cooking as I travel. By diving deep into the culinary traditions of the world, I hope people feel inspired to explore. And by making really detailed tutorials, I hope readers build the confidence they need to cook well anywhere. I'd like for the site to take on a life of its own and become a haven for people who explore places through the kitchen. I'd like to feature the stories of readers from around the world, who've had unforgettable experiences over home-cooked meals in far-flung places. I'd like to build a community full of culinary explorers and help to bring cooking back to the forefront of people's minds. But if it can't do any of those things, I'd settle for it making a ton of money so that I can buy a jet-ski or something."

His own journey has been anything but straightforward.

"I stumbled into web design. My background was in journalism and entrepreneurship, and I learned to build websites to support those interests. I tried starting a handful of businesses over the years. But people were always more interested in my ability to build them websites than they were in anything I was selling on my own pages. That was fine with me because I was smitten with the act of writing code. It's a bit like magic, a transformational process. You take a few bits and bytes, and lay them out correctly and they become more than the sum of their parts. They become something useful or beautiful, something that people enjoy interacting with. That's a thrilling experience to have on a daily basis," he said. "Cooking has the same transformational power. Salt on its own doesn't taste great. Meat alone is bland. But dry-brine a ribeye in a layer of sea salt, and a few hours later you've got something eye-rollingly delicious."

His design clients sing his praises.

"Ethan Brooks is a creative, outside-the-box, absolutely delightful individual. He has an exceptional enthusiasm for life, and makes a point to really live life every day. He is also an articulate, knowledgeable business owner. Although I enjoyed dealing with Ethan on a personal level, his presentation at our Glastonbury Originals networking group made me sit up and say wow.

"You take a few bits and bytes, and lay them out correctly and they become more than the sum of their parts. They become something useful or beautiful, something that people enjoy interacting with. That's a thrilling experience to have on a daily basis."

–Ethan Brooks

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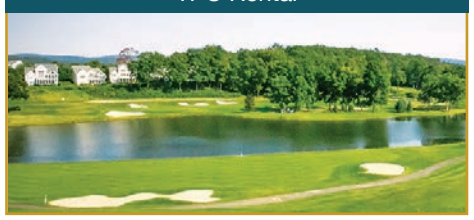

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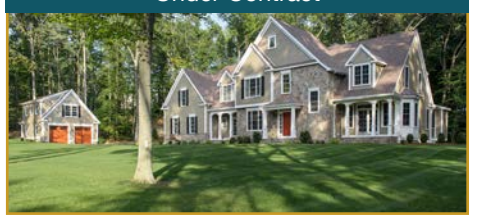

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I found Ethan's genuine concern and commitment to my website, and, ultimately, my business, inspiring and motivating," said Nancy Hayden of Ginger & Pickles Cookies & Classes.

Despite how well his business was doing, he decided he needed to take a step back.

"I think the urge to travel is built into the human psyche," he said. "It's why we wandered out of Africa in the first place, why we've gone to the moon, and are trying to colonize Mars. Something whispers to us from a far-off horizon and says 'Come see what it's like over here.' Funny thing about living on a round planet is we never quite get to that horizon. Most people don't think of travel as part of their everyday lives, and that's where I got lucky. My parents were always willing to take chances in life, and we moved a couple of times when I was a kid, so I got comfortable with living in new places. Then writers like Rolf Potts, Bill Bryson, Tim Ferriss and others showed me that travel didn't have to be relegated to one or two vacations a year. Potts' book 'Vagabonding' is probably the best book ever written on long-term world travel, and Ferriss' '4-Hour Workweek' got me asking interesting questions about how I wanted to spend my time. I'd burnt myself out. I'd worked 10-, 12-, and even 20-hour days, seven days a week for more than two years. I'd done a lot I was proud of, but I was a total zombie. My friends stopped calling, because they knew I was always working, and I couldn't even remember what I used to do for fun."

He took a sabbatical from his company and set out to do some traveling, starting with hiking the Appalachian Trail.

Courtesy photo

Ethan Brooks and a friend push his car in the Utah desert after blowing out its suspension. He calls the experience "one of the greatest drives of my life."

"I'd always loved Bill Bryson's 'A Walk in the Woods'," he said. "When I heard the movie was coming out, I thought it'd be fun to go live the book before seeing the movie. So I decided to spend a month retracing the first section of his hike, from Amicalola Falls in Georgia to Gatlinburg, Tennessee. It was an incredible experience. So much of our lives is spent in the pursuit of more. More education so we can get more work so we can earn more money to buy more stuff. But when you live your life out of a backpack, suddenly your goal becomes the removal of excess at every turn. Because you have to carry everything, you slowly discard all but what's necessary. It's practically a religious experience. The wind and the rain and the mountains baptize you with discomfort, and help you to strip away all the excess in your life. The culture of trail life is wonderful too. There's something about shared hardship that brings total strangers together and forges strong friendships fast. Nature is the grand equalizer. It doesn't matter who you are, or what you've accomplished back home, if you get out into real nature there will come a time when you're shown just how small you are. There will come a time when you're scared, or when you're overwhelmed and want to quit. There will come a time when you're brought face to face with your own mortality, and you suddenly realize the world, the real world, doesn't really care much about you. It's not angry or spiteful. It's just indifferent, and won't go out of its way to keep you alive.

"Even if you go as a group, every person ultimately faces this realization alone. And when you spend your days surrounded by people who've faced their own smallness, and pushed through it, it's really kind of great," he added.

His friend Alexander Herpst, who lives in Glastonbury and works at The Home Depot, joined him for much of the trip.

"I would have to say the characteristic that makes Ethan most unique is his ability to come up with ideas. I don't think there's anyone who's repeated company I enjoy more than his. He's constantly learning new things, adapting and coming up with fresh ideas. When I first met him I had no interest in travel. Thanks to his influence I went traveling for five years around the West Coast, Hawaii and to seven countries," he said.

The two have traveled several times, including a multi-day trip kayaking down the Connecticut River a couple of weeks after graduating from high school, where adventures included getting attacked by a swan and hearing gunshots in the middle of the night.

"It was good times all around on that trip," Herpst said. "Besides his knack for ideas, I'd say his ability to speak impromptu impresses me. His speech is so fluid and well put together, you'd think it scripted, when it's not, making him a great storyteller. [That] and his very good charisma combine to give him excellent social

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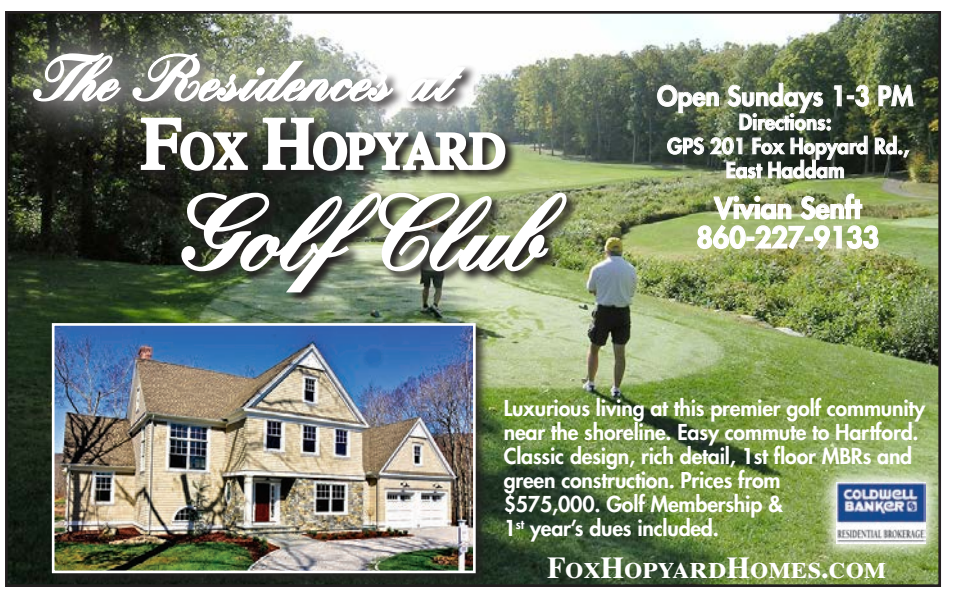
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skills."

Brooks has had some great adventures.

"I like when things go wrong. Once, on a road trip with some friends, we blew out our suspension 30 miles off-road in the middle of the desert. It took six hours to limp the car back to the highway and remains one of the greatest drives of my life. Another time, in New Hampshire, we got lost on the side of a mountain and actually had to make a compass using sticks and the sun. I'd only ever seen that in books or on TV, but it actually really helped us find our way back," he said.

After hiking the trail, Brooks crossed the Atlantic on the Queen Mary 2 and began exploring food in the UK and Europe. He said he went to Europe because he wanted to meet with Bryson and compare notes.

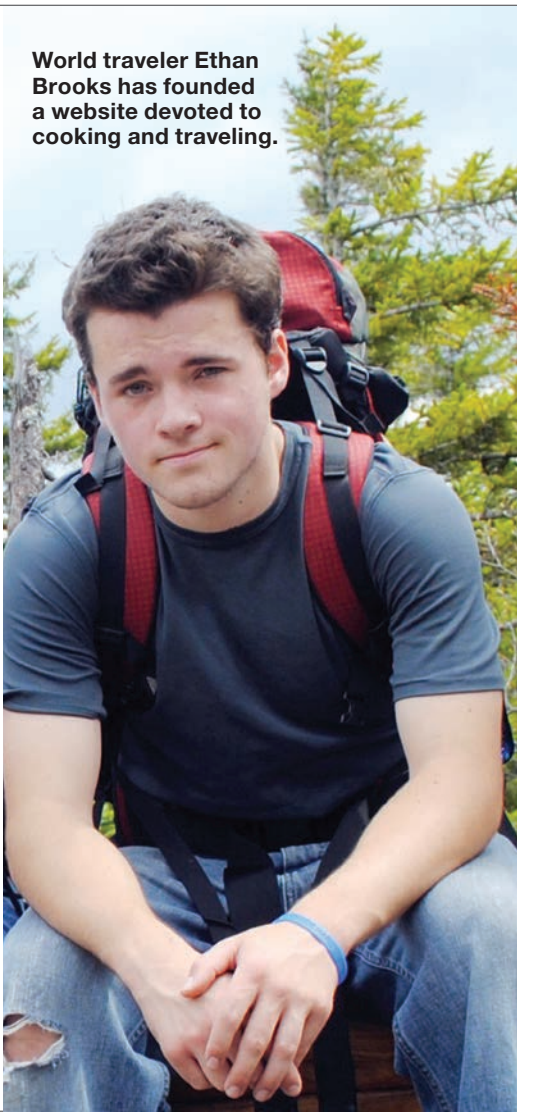
"I've always wondered about the stories that didn't make it into the book. I'm also going to write a book of my own, and I think beers with Bill Bryson would be a great way to end it. Bill, if you're reading this, first round's on me," he joked.

Cooking has been a centerpiece of his travels.

"When you talk about cooking, most people think of it as a hobby. And in the U.S. for sure, access to premade food is so easy, cooking doesn't need to be anything but a hobby. But there's something different that happens when you learn to cook in order to really feed yourself. You build confidence in your own ability to sustain yourself. It changes the way you see the rest of the world. Risky decisions don't carry as much weight, because you realize that if everything goes to hell, you can always go snag a couple of pigeons out of the center of town, and cook up a nice Pigeon Vendée. You'll never starve," he said. "When I traveled, cooking was a way to stretch my budget. But it also became a way to explore a place more deeply. When you choose to cook as a traveler, it comes with a bunch of other decisions about where you'll stay, and how long you'll stay for. It forces you to travel a little slower, and because you need a kitchen, you're often either renting full apartments or staying with locals through online communities like WorkAway or CouchSurfing. If you learn about the local cooking styles, you can't help but learn about the place's history and its people. It gives you a common language to speak, and opens the door to great friendships forged over homemade grub and bottles of cheap wine. I realized all of this, and very quickly, cooking took center stage as the focus of my travels."

Of course, not every dish was a culinary success – and not everyone was impressed with his skills.

"I was in England, living in the house of a Cordon Bleu-trained cook. Cordon Bleu is one of the most respected culinary schools in the world. It's where Julia Child originally trained, along with countless other household names in the cooking industry. When I got to this woman's house, she wouldn't even let me cook a meal. Any time I tried, she'd jump in and tell me a dozen ways I was screwing it up. It got so frustrating, I started cooking late



World traveler Ethan Brooks has founded a website devoted to cooking and traveling.

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at night after she went to bed, just so I wouldn't be interrupted. I dedicated myself to getting better and better, and by the time I left two months later, I could hold my own in her kitchen. My greatest success so far was a reverse-seared ribeye, using a method popularized by J. Kenji Lopez, which she raved about, and a three-course goodbye dinner for her and her family," Brooks said. "My greatest failure, also in that house, came when I tried to make a cauliflower mashed potato substitute. She came all the way to the kitchen from the other side of the house – it was not a small house – demanding to know what I could possibly be cooking that smelled so awful. It was the first time anybody had openly insulted my food. She wasn't wrong though!"

He believes that cooking doesn't have to be a scary experience.

"I think the philosophy I ascribe to is summed up nicely by Ralph Waldo Emerson. He said 'As to the methods there may be a million and then some, but principles are very few. The man who grasps principles can successfully select his own methods. The man who tries methods, ignoring principles, is sure to have trouble.'

"I don't keep a travel bucket list anymore. I use to, then I got into an ill-conceived gentleman's bet as to whether I could knock them all off before I turned 25."

–Ethan Brooks

Cooking intimidates a lot of people because it's such an expansive subject. But people like J. Kenji Lopez, Alton Brown, Tim Ferriss and others work hard to reduce the methods down to a few principles, which helps make it more accessible," he said. "That's what I try to do with Cooking Travelers. Explain the principles behind a dish so that you can recreate it wherever you are with what you have on hand. I try to focus on dishes that have an element of transferability to them as well. For example, Boeuf Bourguignon is a signature French dish. But when you understand the principles involved, you can very quickly change out just one or two ingredients and turn it into American beef stew, or chili, or even Ossobuco. All of those dishes are made using almost the exact same process. The principles of one transfer to the next."

His experiences give him a lot to write about. In addition to his blog, he is working on a book, "The Traveler's Cookbook."

"As a storyteller, my job gets easier the more difficult my circumstances get. Fun in the sun isn't a story, it's a postcard, or a travel agency brochure. Being stranded in the mountains during a blackout monsoon, or literally finding yourself up a creek without a paddle – those are approaching story territory," he said.

He spent some time living in France this year before returning to Glastonbury. He's off to Mexico next, and as far as where the road will take him after that, well, that too is a story.

"I don't keep a travel bucket list anymore. I used to, then I got into an ill-conceived gentleman's bet as to whether I could knock them all off before I turned 25," he said. "The other stakeholder in the wager started racing me through my own list and robbed it of all its meaning. Ultimately I flew across the country, broke into his place, stole his copy of the list and burned it on his lawn in order to release myself from the chains of my own poor judgement. It was an expensive lesson in not sharing your bucket list with people."

He's hoping that cooks and travelers of all levels will be attracted to his new website.

"I do have some encouragement for the non-cooks and non-travelers who are dreaming of trying either. Both cooking, and travel have improved my life in a hundred ways I wasn't expecting when I first started. They're not always easy, and they may not be right for everyone. But I've yet to find one person who's made the leap into either and regretted it," he said. "If you decide it's right for you, then I'll see you on the other side, over at CookingTravelers.com." **GL**

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Kol Haverim hires interim rabbi

Stephen Wylen will serve while congregation searches for new rabbi

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Starting June 1, Rabbi Stephen Wylen will serve as interim rabbi for Congregation Kol Haverim, as the synagogue looks for a new spiritual leader to replace Rabbi Craig Marantz, who is moving on to a new opportunity.

As a child Wylen and his family attended Friday night worship services every week at Main Line Reform Temple in suburban Philadelphia. After earning a degree in English at the University of Pennsylvania, he went on to the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion in Jerusalem and New York. During his years at seminary, Wylen devoted himself to the Hebrew language so that he would graduate with a good facility to study the sacred texts of Judaism. After his ordination in 1980 Wylen accepted a post as the assistant rabbi at Temple DeHirsch Sinai in Seattle, where he met his wife Cheryl, a Seattle native.

He has written several writing books about Judaism and enjoys bicycling and playing golf. He also likes to bake bread, including challah for Shabbat. He agreed to answer some questions for Glastonbury LIFE.

How did you come to choose the career of rabbi?

When I was a teenager I was drawn to the rabbis in my life: Rabbi Ted Gordon, Rabbi Milton Shulman, Rabbi Harvey Goldman. I saw myself in their shoes. I was greatly drawn to Jewish learning, which challenged my mind and uplifted my thoughts. I was active in NFTY, the Reform Jewish youth organization. After college I considered my future and realized I still wanted to be a rabbi above any other calling. Before I turned 16 I wanted to be a biologist, and I am still interested in the intersection of science and religion.

Tell us about the role of interim rabbi and how you came to it.

Last July I retired after 20 years as the rabbi of Temple Beth Tikvah in Wayne, NJ. I had previously served congregations in Seattle, Wash.; Huntington, W.V.; and Scranton, Penn. I knew that I still wanted to serve so I was happy when a call came from Beth Israel Congregation in Jackson, MS. They needed a rabbi for the High Holy Days. They asked me to stay on as interim rabbi while they searched for a permanent, settled rabbi. I had taken the training for interim rabbis and was happy to do it. I have really enjoyed this year, so I decided to continue in my new career as an interim rabbi.

There are unique challenges, and the task of interim rabbi calls on one to apply all that one has learned about Judaism, congregational life and human relations in a lifetime of service. The interim rabbi serves as a bridge between the outgoing long-term rabbi and the incoming long-term rabbi. It is hard for one rabbi to directly succeed another. People are still devoted to the former rabbi and have become used to his or her ways. A new rabbi is going to do things differently, just from being a different person. The interim rabbi helps the congregation say a fond farewell to the outgoing rabbi and sets the stage for success for the new settled rabbi. If the congregation wants to experiment with new ways of doing things the interim rabbi provides that opportunity, but the first goal is to make sure that all congregational functions proceed smoothly in this transition period. The flock are reassured to know there is a shepherd.

Stephen Wylen is serving as interim rabbi for Congregation Kol Haverim while they search for a new spiritual leader.

How long do you typically stay at interim positions?

An interim serves for between one and two years, depending on how much time the congregation wants to engage in self-study and transition work, and when they are ready to engage in the search process for the new settled rabbi. Longer than that is not advisable, as the interim rabbi should not become too settled in place.

What are the challenges and rewards of being an interim rabbi?

The interim rabbi must act quickly upon arrival to learn the customs and traditions of the congregation. The interim rabbi must get to know the people and hear their concerns. The interim rabbi must discover who is housebound or otherwise needs some pastoral attention. People have a deep

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relationship with their rabbi and may have to go through an emotional process to be ready to welcome a new religious leader. The interim rabbi must create a space for that to happen.

The immediate reward of the interim rabbinate is that you get to meet a whole new group of wonderful people who welcome you into their life. Also, you only have a limited time with them, so you try to bring them the best of what you have to offer all the time. The long-term reward is knowing that you made a difference, using the skills and wisdom you have acquired in a lifetime of sacred service.

What attracted you to Kol Haverim?

It was the people. When I had my Skype interview with the Kol Haverim search committee, they set me at ease. I felt like I was sharing my heart with old friends even though we were just meeting. I had the same feeling as I met the board, the staff and the general membership. It felt good to be together. I want to enjoy my service as a rabbi, and I know that I will enjoy being at Kol Haverim. I am excited to come.

I also have some roots in Connecticut. My mother went to high school in Winsted. She cooked many New England dishes, like Indian pudding. We used to drive up the Merritt Parkway on the way to visit Grandpa, and my mom always pointed out the beautiful bridges. No visit to Boston to visit my brother and sister there is complete without a lunch stop at Rein's Deli. I have relatives at Kol Haverim. You will not get me to speak about Yankees vs. Red Sox, but having lived in Seattle, I am used to shouting "Go Huskies!" and I am ready to say it again.

What are your goals for the congregation?

It is too early for me to say. I want to listen carefully to what the members envision for the Temple. Kol Haverim has a lot of good things already going on, and I want to be in step with all the positive energy. Hopefully I will find plentiful opportunity to make my own contribution.

What role do you think the synagogue plays in modern times?

Congregational life is not as much at the center in American society as it once was. This is true for every religion and denomination. But I happen to believe that after two thousand years, the synagogue is still a vital institution. It is central to living a Jewish life. Judaism is a religion that is practiced in community, not individually. The synagogue is that community, especially in America with our freedom of religion. The earliest synagogue for which we have archeological evidence is from 2nd century BCE Egypt. Since that time the synagogue has taken on many new forms. The synagogue of the future may not exactly resemble the synagogue of the past, but it will still be the home address for all who care to live their life as a Jew. It is clear to me that many members of Kol Haverim share that passion.

Please tell us about your books.

I am proud of my books. God has granted me a certain facility with words and I use that gift to share the beautiful teachings of Judaism with all who seek knowledge. "Settings of Silver" has been for nearly 30 years the most widely used college-level introduction to Judaism. "The Jews in the Time of Jesus" is popular with both Jews and Christians who are fascinated by this formative period for Western religions. "The Seventy Faces of Torah" introduces the reader to the breadth of Jewish sacred literature. My publisher at Paulist Press, Fr. Lawrence Boadt, asked me to write it to hand to his students who wondered why Jews do not find Jesus in the Old Testament, and he asked me to put a lot of Talmud into it.

I am not working on a new book right now, though I have one in mind.

And your family?

I have been married to my wonderful wife Cheryl for 35 years. She maintains our household in New Jersey but will be a frequent presence at Kol Haverim during the term of my interim rabbinate. We are blessed with four wonderful children and with wonderful grandchildren. Two of our children live in America and two in Israel. We are proud of our family. **GL**

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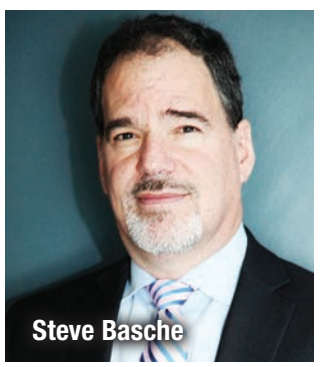
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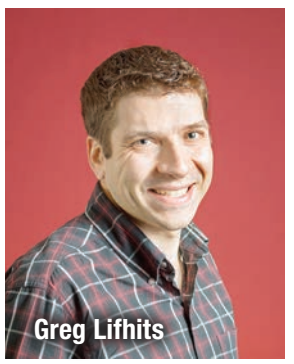
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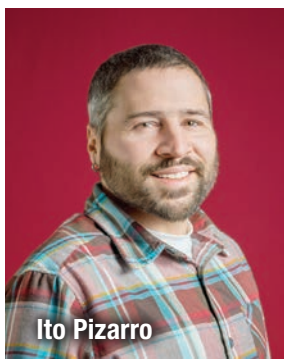
Ito Pizarro

Tammy Santucci

John Paul Starkey

The law firm of Hassett & George has hired **Steve Basche**, who will focus on estate planning and administration, probate and corporate law. He will primarily work in the company's new local office and will focus on estate planning and administration, probate and corporate law.

Kim Sherman has joined the local office of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices New England Properties. She has worked in real estate since 2011 and specializes in first-time buyers and investors.

Cronin and Company, LLC, a full-service independent marketing communications company, has hired **Kelly Krug** as a copywriter, **Greg Lifhits** as manager of analytics strategy, **Ito Pizarro** as a front end developer, **Tammy Santucci** as a management supervisor and **John Paul Starkey** as a digital media analyst.

The local **Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage office** has been recognized with the Premier Office award, the highest honor given to Coldwell Banker offices. The award is presented to the top 20 percent of Coldwell Banker offices in the U.S. and Canada. The local office is one of only four offices in Connecticut and Westchester County to receive the honor.

Keri Watkins

Keri Watkins has been named a 5-Star Professional Realtor by Connecticut Magazine. She is a member of Margaret Wilcox & Associates of William Raveis. **GL**

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Slice of LIFE

photos by Brian Ambrose

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Fresh from the Farm tasting event

It was a beautiful spring day at the Fresh from the Farm tasting event at Killam & Bassette Farmstead. Hundreds came out to sample carrot cake jam pancakes, pulled pork, and farm fresh quiche as well as hayrides and products from local vendors. 1. Sophie Kamis pets a cow. 2. Kelly Lake flips some carrot cake jam pancakes. 3. Tucker Parmelee feeds the chickens. 4. Barbara Mazur enjoys homemade quiche and pulled pork. 5. Ethan Payne enjoys a tractor ride. 6. Annalyse and Izabella Mckenna take advantage of face painting by painter Katie Sullivan. 7. Ryan Spils-Leonard, Matt Bureau, Frankie Justin Lamprey, John Dotson, Jay Wood and Brian Hartley make up Frankie Justin Lamprey and Roughstock. 8. Izaiah Candelora samples a cookie and listens to the music. 9. Anson Davis strings Froot Loops for a necklace. 10. Jamie Bassette shows that cows can jump. 11. Mallory Cunningham pets a pig. 12. Kevin and Chris Bassette enjoy the festivities. 13. Hundreds of people enjoyed the event. 14. Lucas and Sophia Thompson pose with the Killam & Bassette Farmstead cutout.

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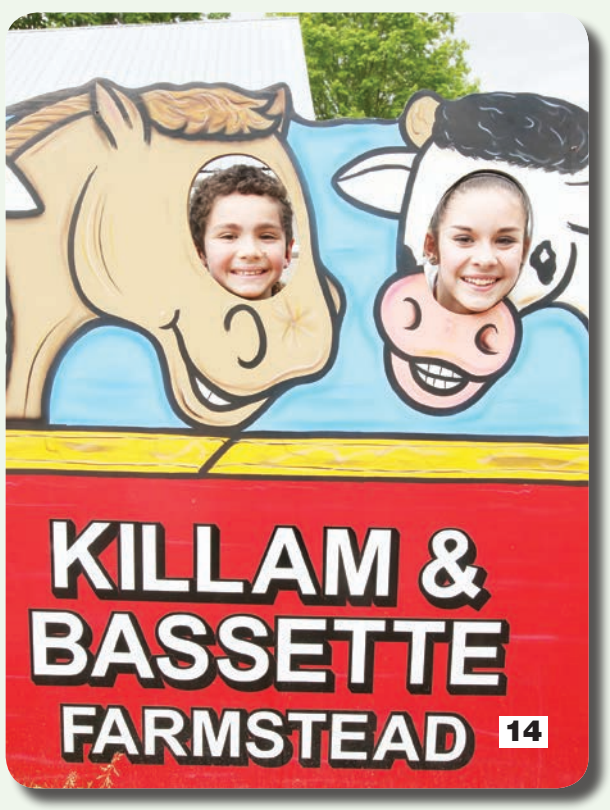

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Photos by Mara Dresner

Above left: Every Firehouse Subs location features an original mural. This one depicts the Connecticut River and apple trees. Owners Jeff and Jen Finnerty's children are also part of the mural. **Above right:** Jeff Finnerty, along with his wife, Jen, owns the first Firehouse Subs in the state.

Firehouse Subs opens first Connecticut location

Sub shop supports first responders

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Jeff and Jen Finnerty had been living in Florida for a decade when they decided it was time to come back to Connecticut. They'd both grown up in the state, Jen in Stamford and Jeff in Guilford.

"We had all of our family here. We'd wanted to move back to Connecticut for some time," said Jeff Finnerty, who worked for Coca Cola for 16 years in food service sales and hospitality management. "We settled on the greater Hartford area when we were first looking for a place to live. We just fell in love with Glastonbury the first time we visited."

When they moved to town last August, Finnerty knew he was due for a career change. In Florida one of his bigger customers was the Jacksonville-based Firehouse Subs.

"I'd spent several years talking to the owners of the company. There were no Firehouse Subs in Connecticut yet," he said.

The local Firehouse Subs, the state's first, opened in March.

"We landed here first to live, then we were looking around the area and found the opportunity here for the restaurant," he said. "I had the unique perspective of having done business with them and getting to know the owners. They're career firefighters and their father was a career firefighter." He said Robin Sorensen, who owns the chain with his brother Chris, especially has a passion for food.

"He opened a sub shop around the idea that firefighters like to get together and have a good meal. We love the food, but we love the people who own the business. Despite the fact that there are nearly 1,000 restaurants, it's still a large family. We had a lot of trust and faith in the two of them, the way they support the franchisees and support us."

The Finnertys liked the idea of the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation, which was created in 2005 to provide funding, life-saving equipment and educational opportunities to first responders and public safety organizations. The foundation has given more than $17 million to police, fire and emergency medical services departments in 44 states and Puerto Rico.

"A big thing for the two of us was we wanted to have more purpose to what we do," Finnerty said. "The stories we hear are incredible. We'll hear, we donated this piece of equipment and it saved a person's life few days later."

Money for the fund is raised in two ways. First, Firehouse Subs sells empty pickle buckets for $2 each. Finnerty said they've already been a popular item.

"People use them for tomato planters, to carry baseballs in, there are a variety of uses. One hundred percent of the $2 goes to lifesaving equipment for fire departments," he said. "We actually have a waiting list."

The primary way of raising funds is by asking people to "round up."

"If a sandwich was $6.80, we would ask, 'Would you want to round up and donate 20 cents to the foundation?' People have been very generous. It's already paid dividends in Glastonbury," he said.

The fund has approved a grant for two battery-operated "Jaws of Life" and two extrication cutters for the town.

"We'll be replacing some outdated equipment that is no longer serviceable," local fire Chief Michael Thurz said. "We are waiting for their organization for the funding to go out and make the purchase."

The equipment the department has been using is more than 20 years old.

"It's one less thing I have to submit to next year's budget that has to be replaced," he said, adding that he's found the restaurant's food "really tasty."

The fire department also provided historical photos going back to 1929 to decorate some of the walls.

"We wanted to make this particular location a mini-museum to honor the heritage of the

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Glastonbury volunteer fire department," Finnerty said. "The department has probably been our best customers. They've been here every day."

All first responders are provided with a free beverage on every visit to the restaurant.

The department is also featured on a mural in the restaurant. Each Firehouse Subs location has a custom, hand-painted mural. The Glastonbury mural features a fire engine and firefighters, as well as the Finnerty children, one of whom holds a whaling spear, which pays tribute to the Hartford Whalers, and the UConn mascot, Jonathan the Husky. The background shows the Connecticut River and the oldest running ferry in North America, along with apple trees.

The restaurant has already held fundraisers for several groups, and Finnerty wants to do more.

"We are always open and seeking the opportunity to help anybody," he said.

Recent fundraisers, where a portion of an evening's sales go to the nonprofit, have benefitted Hopewell Elementary School and Best Buddies.

"That night with the Best Buddies was excellent. People were so excited to be part of it. This place was buzzing; it was standing room only. That was an awesome night," he said. "We're open to any group that wants to help bring people in and we can help them raise funds. We're here to help."

While Finnerty wants to make a difference in the community, naturally he's also excited about the food.

"The concept for the menu begins with high-quality ingredients," he said. "We buy the best possible; nothing's been processed. We slice it every day fresh; we procure fresh produce. I believe the magic to our food is the steaming process. We take the meat and cheese and put it in the small steamer for two minutes and 45 seconds."

"People are alive today because of the pickle buckets we sell."

– Jeff Finnerty

"It's different from a typical Connecticut or New England grinder," he said. "We make a great sandwich. It's a really high-quality product we can be proud of."

His favorite sandwich is the New York Steamer.

"It is corned beef, pastrami and provolone cheese. We actually put some Italian dressing on the meat and cheese, and that marinates the meat. I love all the subs, but I always seem to come back to that one," he said.

Firehouse Subs offers more than 50 hot sauces, including Captain Sorensen's Datil Pepper Hot Sauce, named in honor of the founding brothers' father, a 43-year retired fire captain. The restaurant offers several low-calorie sandwich and salad choices as well.

The restaurant has 38 seats. Finnerty said about half of their customers eat in, with the balance taking good to go. Customers can also order with an app or through the website.

Finnerty and his wife, Jen, who was doing marketing and event coordination for a large financial services firm in Manhattan when the couple met, have a development agreement to open five restaurants in the Hartford area in the next five years and are looking for a location for a second restaurant.

Finnerty, who's been working seven days a week, 16 hours a day, said he likes meeting the customers.

"One thing I love about this business is when people come in, no matter what's going on in life, we have the opportunity to positively interact. That's very satisfying. To layer it all with every sandwich we sell, every pickle bucket we sell, we have the opportunity to save lives. People are alive today because of the pickle buckets we sell," he said.

"What I enjoy most is to see someone come in who's never been here before. I greet them, tell them about the menu and the steaming process, and they say, 'This is fantastic; I'll definitely be back,' and there's a smile on their face. Or when I walk over to a table with two small children and hand them a plastic fire hat and see their faces light up. I get to do that dozens of times a day, and that's really great. You're going to get a good sandwiches piled high with premium ingredients and steamed in a way you've never enjoyed a sandwich before, and you can help save lives by eating that sandwich and donating a couple of nickels."

Firehouse Subs h=as more than 960 restaurants in 44 states, Puerto Rico and Canada. **GL**

Firehouse Subs is located is at 2520 Main St. and is open daily from 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Learn more at 860-430-1800 or firehousesubs.com.

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Dr. Santos, a specialist in cardiology, has joined the medical staff at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center.

Dr. Santos received her medical degree from University of the Philippines Manila College of Medicine and completed her residency in internal medicine at the University of Connecticut Health Center. She went on to fellowship training in cardiology, also at UConn Health Center.

A member of Cottage Grove Cardiology, Dr. Santos is board certified in internal medicine, general cardiology, adult echocardiography, nuclear cardiology and vascular interpretation.

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Anne Minor speaks at the first "Getting to Know Your Muslim Neighbors" event at the Congregational Church in South Glastonbury, with her daughter, Rebecca, and husband Mark, looking on.

Photo by Pat Carlson

Dispelling fears

Church hosts 'Getting to Know Your Muslim Neighbors'

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

In an effort to combat misinformation, the Congregational Church in South Glastonbury has launched a three-part series, "Getting to Know Your Muslim Neighbors." The free program will conclude on June 6.

"South Church has a long history of helping people get over their fears of people who are different, said the Rev. Dick Allen, the church's senior minister. "When it became clear to us that a fear of Muslims was spreading across our land, we knew we needed to take some positive action. The best way to overcome any fear, any phobia, is to get to know individuals in that particular population. ... Strong communities are ones that embrace diversity. A diverse community reflects the fullness of God's creativity. Diversity in ethnicity, in language, in religion, in cuisine, in economic prosperity all contribute to a healthy community. Our program calls attention to this truth."

"The theme of the program is to provide the audience with information about Islam and Muslims. We hope that it will result in friendship and will disseminate incorrect perceptions. According to statistics 62 percent of Americans have never met a Muslim and so are very likely to stereotype and have incorrect perceptions about Islam and Muslims," said Aida Mansoor, community chaplain and president of the Muslim Coalition of Connecticut.

"The Muslim Coalition of Connecticut is dedicated to building bridges in community through education and outreach. One of our goals is to clarify misunderstandings and misinformation about Islam and Muslims and that is why this program is so important for us as there is so much misinformation. I hope we will be able to clarify our beliefs and practices and more importantly that we give the audience a chance to meet real Muslims who practice their faith. I hope we can work together more on community service and other important projects with people of other faiths to benefit all in the community and that we can grow in our understanding and respect of one another," Mansoor said.

Laura Perry, a member of the church's Adult Faith Enrichment Team, said this is not the first time the church has reached out to others in the community.

The UCC, United Church of Christ, which our church is a member of, has also been actively involved in educating folks about world religions, and in addition, they have put out a number of policy statements supporting religious freedom in our community, country and world. Our adult faith committee has sponsored talks about Palestine/Israel issues and the Egyptian Coptic Church. Through these events we have learned about these different faiths and their practices.

Allen said the program has several goals.

"We hope our church and community will move beyond tolerating Muslim residents to embracing them as neighbors. We hope that anyone burdened by a fear of Islam will be freed of that burden. We hope that everyone who attends will leave with a much deeper understanding of Islam and of what it means to be a Muslim in our region," he said. I am a much better person today for having befriended these courageous neighbors who have allowed me to get to know them on a personal level. I long for others to have the same enriching experience."

Mansoor said misconceptions can sometimes come in roundabout ways.

"Although American Muslims are around 2 percent of the American population, they account for 10 percent of practicing physicians here in the U.S., a disproportionately high percentage. We need to ask ourselves why Muslims are not perceived as those supporting health and life when they serve the population in this way," she said.

Allen hopes that the relationships continue long after the program.

"The current political rhetoric has generated significant fear among our Muslim neighbors," he said. "We want our Muslim neighbors to know they are welcome here and safe in our midst. We hope our program series accomplishes this purpose." GL

Dr. Reza Mansoor, founding member of the Muslim Coalition, will speak June 6 at 7 p.m. about "'Hot Button' Issues Pertaining to Islam and Muslims," at the Congregational Church in South Glastonbury, 949 Main St. The program is free and light refreshments will be served. To learn more, call 860-633-4651 or visit southcongregational.org. Learn more about the Muslim Coalition of Connecticut at muslimcoalitionct.org.

Bird baths, pears and pigs

Lois Eldridge is enjoying a long career as an artist

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Photo by Mara Dresner

Lois Eldridge often works in the garage of her South Glastonbury home.

Lois Eldridge's early days gave little hint of the artistic life to come.

"I grew up on a dairy farm in North Dakota. We used a horse and buggy for berry picking," said Eldridge, who also has fond memories of Sunday family picnics and remembers making her own dress for her eighth-grade graduation.

"My eighth-grade teacher, Miss Wyler, was one of the most instrumental people in my life," she said. "She was an amazing teacher."

Even as a child Eldridge had an interest in languages and went on to teach French and Spanish.

"No one in North Dakota wanted to study languages. It started with the Indians that came to town on Saturdays to shop. I would go and stand in the middle of these families and listen to them," she said. "I was fascinated by the Indians' language. I would ask, 'How do you say this in the Sioux language?'"

She attended Jamestown College in Jamestown, North Dakota, and the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. Her professors told her that if she wanted to get good training, she needed to go to the east coast to study. She took their advice and attended Columbia University in New York City and Middlebury College in Vermont.

Eldridge has always loved to travel, including spending five months backpacking.

"I came home on the Queen Elizabeth. Then I made my own wedding dress. It was a lot like Kate Middleton's dress, but this was in 1954, so she copied me," she said with a smile.

Eldridge and her late husband, Kenneth, had three children, Susan, Charlotte and David.

The couple taught together in Fairfield and in Bogota, Colombia, before settling in Glastonbury. They were hired to teach in Glastonbury while they were still in Colombia.

"We couldn't just fly home for an interview for a job," she said.

However, the superintendent of schools from Fairfield had taken a new a job while they were away.

"He was now the superintendent of schools in Glastonbury, which we had never heard of. He bragged that he was getting teachers from all over the world. He could hire us by phone because we knew him from Fairfield for two years," she said.

Eldridge cultivated her love of art through the years.

"I've always loved it; I've always gone to museums my whole life. I don't like to go to museums with people. I'll say, 'I'll meet you at the front door'. I just want to sit and enjoy something all by myself," said Eldridge, who would go to museums every day while traveling.

When going to Columbia University, she was in arts heaven.

"I was working at Schrafft's and later the Holiday Inn by St. Patrick's Cathedral," she said. "It was a waitress job. I was also going to things on Broadway and Carnegie Hall and just loving the city, and going to the Met so often and just sitting." She would also often go to The Frick Collection, which she described as "just heaven."

It was while she was living in Fairfield that she began to discover her own artistic talent.

"We went to Westport, Conn., to a kitchen place to buy breakfast dishes. There in the window was a guy from Italy who was throwing pottery on a wheel. I said to my husband, 'Leave me here; I just want to watch him,'" said Eldridge, who turned 88 in April.

After settling back in Connecticut, she began to take lessons, first joining a friend who

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was taking lessons at Rusty Kiln in Wethersfield. After attending an art show in Middlefield, where many of the exhibitors were members at Wesleyan Potters in Middletown, she began working and teaching there. She has been there for the last 52 years and has formed tight bonds with the community of artists.

"We'd become very close friends; the clay united us. After we would work for year or two, you'd say, 'my friend Lois,' not 'my teacher Lois,'" she said.

Eldridge is known for several types of pieces. One is her pears, which she said people will stop her to tell her they own them.

"People will say, 'I have your pears.' So the clay hasn't just united me with potters, it has united me with people all over this town," Eldridge said.

She is also known for her bird baths. "They just tell you these wonderful stories. It's a uniting force with people and what they like to buy and what they put in their homes," she said.

She also makes special items, such as a large pot that was inspired by a lunar eclipse.

She sells her work through Wesleyan Potters, at shows and directly. She's also been a member of the Silvermine Guild at the Silvermine Arts Center in New Canaan for 35 years and sells there as well.

Lois Eldridge is known for her bird baths.

"I do a good amount of sales from the garage," she said, adding that she displays various pieces of work there. "I have a wheel in the basement, and I have two kilns in the garage and one kiln in the basement. I do all my hand building in the garage in the sunshine for three seasons. I do bird baths out there and fire them at home."

Depending on whether she has a show coming up, she might work as many as eight or nine hours a day.

She got started on her signature pears because of a class assignment.

"We had an assignment to do a pot that described us. I looked at myself and said, 'I'm a pear.' It's a beautiful fruit. My afternoon treat is goat cheese on slices of Bosc pear. Every time I go to the store, I have to buy pears."

She also makes what she calls

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"funny little pigs," which are big sellers at shows.

"I'm good at figuring out what to take to a show that number one, has a market for it, I know the market, and I know the price range. I go to shows with what will please the market and the price," she said. "Who needs a bird bath? Who needs to spend $165 on a bird bath? But I sell them all the time."

She was inspired to create them by a trip to Yellowstone Park.

"There's an enormous pond called the Morning Glory Pool," she said. "It's all brown algae around the edge and then goes to turquoise and blue. I just sat and marveled on that. When I came home, I said, 'I'm going to make a bowl with a brown edge, deep blue and turquoise'."

She purchased big marble slabs to use. She had a bowl on the slabs and two birds landed on it.

"That became my design," she said of the bird baths.

"Lois Eldridge's pottery features simple, elegant designs, and beautiful, experimental glazes. Her long and successful career is an inspiration to us all, a true master," said Kathy Simmons, past president and current board member of Glastonbury Arts.

Eldridge is a founder of the guild. She was teaching at Glastonbury High School when a fellow teacher asked her why there wasn't an organization in town to promote artists.

"So I said, 'Let's start one,'" she said. "I'm so grateful to all the people who kept it growing. I'm very grateful. A lot of volunteers do a lot of work for it."

Through the years Eldridge has frequently indulged her love of travel. She's visited almost all of the United States, as well as countries as diverse as Tanzania, Bolivia, Australia, Japan, Russia, India, Kenya and Greece.

Twenty years ago, when she was in her late 60s, she decided she wanted to earn more money for travel. She took a job with American Airlines, working first in domestic sales and then in international sales.

"It was the hardest job I ever had. I had never touched a computer before. I didn't know how to turn the computer on," she said. "Twenty-two people showed up for interviews and I was the only one they accepted."

What she loved about the job was the ability to travel, often with newfound friends from the airline.

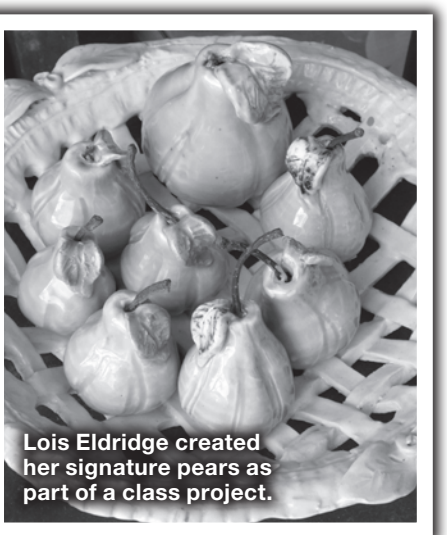
"I traveled the world," she said of the trips. "You're a better agent for your experience."

She's also tried different forms of art.

"I did weaving for two years at Wesleyan Potters. I love weaving. I think everyone should be weaving like the way I think everyone should read a good book. When I was weaving, I had the experience that I would just want to do a few more rows of weaving to see how it would turn out. I'd stay up to 2, 3 a.m.," she said.

Eldridge, who is a board member of the Society of Connecticut Craftsmen, has won several awards and participated in many exhibitions.

"I have persistence and I enjoy it," she said of Wesleyan Potters. "There are 100 members there. Probably there are 80 potters there that I would say are much better potters and artists than myself. I'm not talking silly; I'm talking reality," said Eldridge, who said there are many benefits to working with clay. "It's about as creative as you can be in the art world. It can be sculptural; it can be useful; it's very versatile and it feels great." **GL**



Lois Eldridge created her signature pears as part of a class project.

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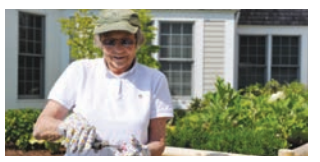

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LIVING Your Best LIFE

Are you lonely, or do you know a senior who could use some friends?

Here are some tips that can help promote social health and connectedness from Patti White, supervisor of senior services in Glastonbury, and a variety of Internet sources.

Stay on the go. Take advantage of public transportation, rides from friends and family members, or town-sponsored transportation geared to seniors.

Get in touch. Churches, travel clubs and other special interest groups often have programs designed for seniors. Volunteering also is a good activity to stay connected with others.

Look locally. Towns usually have senior centers and senior-focused activities that a great way to keep active and make new friends.

Pamper something. After years of nurturing their family members, seniors might enjoy nurturing a pet if they are able. Caring for a garden or indoor plants is also helpful.

Make meals a social occasion. Food provides an excellent opportunity to spend time with other people in a variety of settings.

Try technology. Teach a senior how to use a computer and discover the world of the Internet and applications such as Skype. Many senior centers offer computer classes.

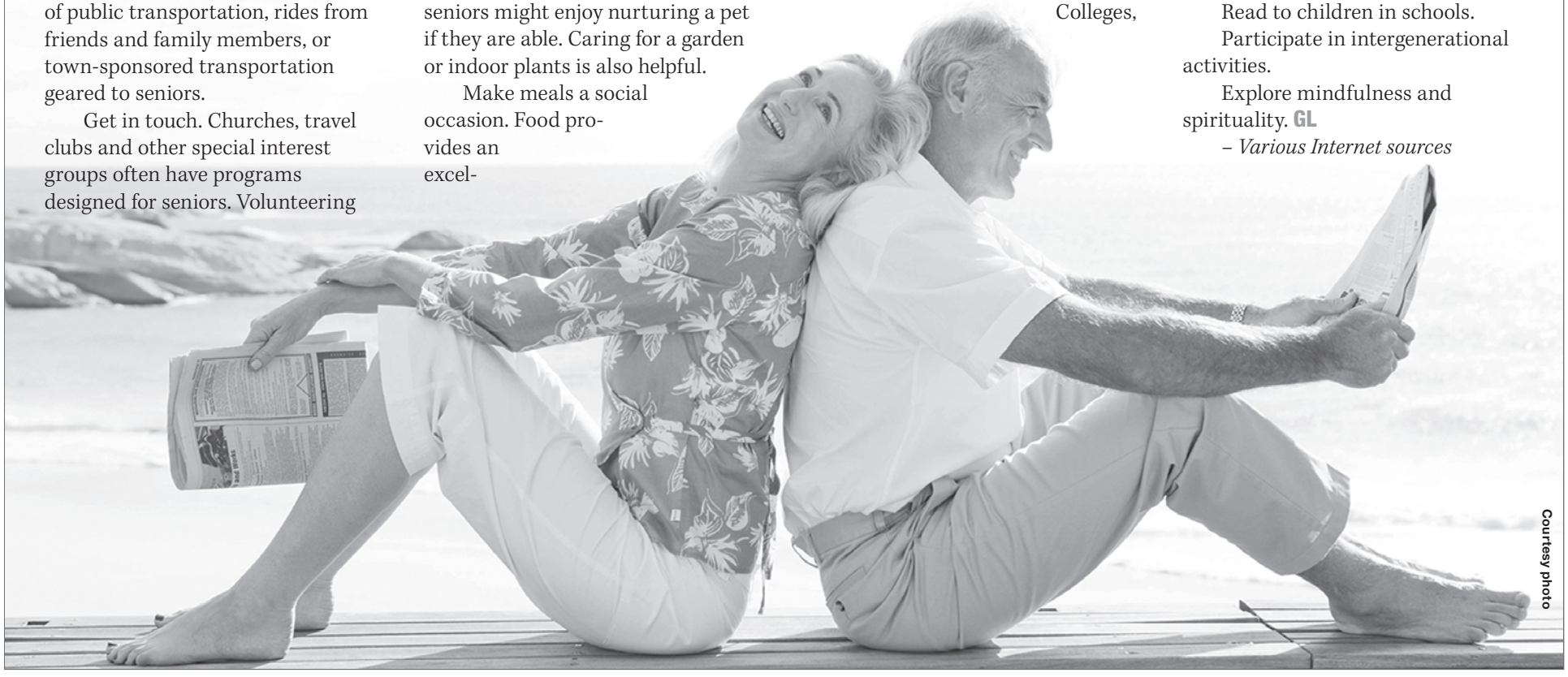
Get classy. Colleges, community centers, church groups and others offer classes that appeal to people of all ages. Check out the knitting class at the local yarn shop or classes through the local adult education program or a nearby community college, learn to plan an instrument or a new language.

Read to children in schools.

Participate in intergenerational activities.

Explore mindfulness and spirituality. GL

– Various Internet sources



Courtesy photo

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LIVING Your Best LIFE

Movies about senior citizens

Grumpy Old men, 1993 – Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau – A lifelong feud is worsened when a young woman moves into the neighborhood

On Golden Pond, 1981 – Henry Fonda and Katharine Hepburn – Couple agrees to take care of their estranged daughter's boyfriend's son

Driving Miss Daisy, 1989 – Morgan Freeman and Jessica Tandy – Story of an older woman and her African American chauffeur in the American South

Harold and Maude, 1971 – Ruth Gordon – Harold is changed forever when he meets Maude, a lively 70-something

The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, 2011 – Judi Dench, Bill Nighy, Maggie Smith and Tom Wilkinson – British retires head to India to live in a rundown hotel

Cocoon, 1985, and **Cocoon: The Return,** 1988 – Seniors swim in a pool with alien cocoons, then in the sequel have to decide whether to stay on earth or return to the place where nobody ages

The Sunshine Boys, 1975 – Walter Matthau and George Burns – vaudeville duo agree to get back together for a television special and then discover they can't stand each other any more

Going in Style, 1979 – Beauge Burns, Art Carney and Lee Strasberg – Three men who need money decide to plan a bank robbery

About Schmidt, 2002 – Jack Nicholson – Newly retired man travels to his estranged daughter's wedding

Away from Her, 2006 – Julie Christie and Michael Murphy – Alzheimer's disease and romantic triangle in a nursing home

The Bucket List, 2007 – Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman -- Two terminally ill men head out to fulfill their list of things to do before they die

Amour, 2012 – Jean-Louis Trintignant and Emmanuelle Riva – Older couple, retired music teachers, find their life changed when the wife has a stroke

Freezer Geezers, 2009 – Documentary about a team competing in the 75 and older division of a hockey tournament

Is Anybody There?, 2008 – Michael Caine – Young boy England meets a retired magician in the nursing home his parents run

Ladies in Lavender, 2004 – Maggie Smith and Judi Dench – Sisters meet a young mysterious foreigner on the beach in 1930's Cornwall

Quartet, 2012 -– Maggie Smith, Tom Courtenay, Pauline Collins and Billy Connolly – Comedy/drama set at a home for retired musicians

Still Mine, 2013 – James Cromwell and Geneviève Bujold – Elderly couple fights to build a home in New Brunswick

The Trip to Bountiful, 1985 – Geraldine Page and John Heard – Elderly woman wants to visit her childhood home in Texas in the 1940s.

Up, 2009 – Animated story of 78-year old and a young stowaway.

Young@Heart, 2007 – Documentary about a chorus of senior citizens from Massachusetts who cover songs by rockers like Jimi Hendrix. GL

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10:15am Registration 10:30 Program Begins
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www.covenantvillageofcromwell.org

People notes

Courtesy photos

Kerrie Lane Sullivan, a 1993 graduate of the University of Hartford, will serve as a member-at-large on the university's Alumni Association's board of directors.

Debbie Howard, the coordinator of English Language Learning for the local school system, and Judith Fitzgerald, first-grade teacher at Naubuc Elementary School, have been awarded $2,500 grants through the Fund for Teachers to study strategies for mindfulness in education to increase students' focus and reduce stress among students and teachers at the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in Stockbridge, Mass., this summer.

A total of 15 students from Glastonbury High School and Smith Middle School participated in the annual poetry recitation contest sponsored by the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers this spring.

They are **Iris Zhao; Emily Shel; Nicholas Wing,** who took third place for Chinese in his division; **Alexandra Marcone,** third place for Russian in her division; **Delaney Hurley; Paige Lee,** second place for Russian in her division; **Maria Ekladious; Elena Bible,** first place for Japanese in her division; **Lilly Horrigan,** third place for Russian in her division; **Yuliana Turmeque-Gallego; Kathleen O'Hara,** first place for Russian in her division; **Gwenyth Ross,** second place for Russian in her division; **Cailin Brady; Brianna Fonda,** second place for Russian in her division; and **Samantha McCormick,** third place for Spanish in her division.

Glastonbury High School students **Summer Xu** and **Wallis Boyd** were recognized as top scholar-athletes at the 2016 Connecticut Association of Schools/Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference scholar-athlete banquet sponsored by McDonald's.

Rachel Santarsiero, a sophomore member of the rowing team at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, has been named to the New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference's academic all-conference team.

Kerrie Lane Sullivan

Jennifer Gifford

Timothy Taylor, a senior at Eastern Connecticut State University, has been inducted into Delta Mu Delta, the school's business honor society.

Jennifer Gifford has been promoted to vice president of community resources for the United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut. She has a bachelor's degree in human development and family studies from the University of Connecticut and a master's degree in social work from the Boston College School of Social Work.

Daniel P. O'Connor, who has served on the board and as chairman of the board of directors for Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, has received the center's annual Spirit Award. He is now chairman of the board of directors for Trinity Health – New England.

Marty Carroll is the chairman of this year's 10th Annual Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation Golf Tournament. The event will take place July 11 at the Wethersfield Country Club. Carroll founded the tournament, which will benefit the Marine Corps Scholarship foundation in its efforts to honor Marines by educating their children. **GL**

a day in the LIFE of Mary Ellen Dombrowski

Chamber of commerce president has many roles

by Nancy Thompson
Editor

There isn't much down time in Mary Ellen Dombrowski's work day, and that's fine with her.

Dombrowski, president of the new Connecticut River Valley Chamber of Commerce, often runs from one meeting to the next, sometimes pausing briefly to fix herself a cup of tea or make or return a phone call.

Last year was especially hectic, since the Glastonbury and East Hartford chambers were in the process of closing and merging to form a new entity known as the Connecticut Valley Chamber of Commerce. Dombrowski, the long-time president of the Glastonbury chamber, helped facilitate the merger while performing her job locally, as well as acting as the East Hartford Chamber's temporary president.

The new chamber came into being early this year, with Dombrowski as president and a part-time staff person splitting her time between the local office on Main Street and an office at Goodwin College in East Hartford.

Dombrowski agreed to share a typical day – if there is such a thing – with Glastonbury LIFE.

The Wethersfield resident and fitness proponent had already walked more than three miles with her husband, John, by the time we met at 9 a.m. in her comfortable office on the first floor of the historic former Welles-Chapman Tavern at the corner of Main Street and Hebron Avenue. The office is lined with family photos, Glastonbury memorabilia and slogans such as "Be a fountain, not a drain."

Dombrowski's 9:30 meeting was postponed and eventually cancelled, giving her time for impromptu meetings with a couple of staff members and a chance to make a few phone calls and meet with Mike "Ski" Chemerynski, owner of Hair Today and one of the organizers of the chamber's new "Do a 180, MOVE!" campaign.

Later in the morning, Dombrowski moved to the chamber's conference room on the second floor for a planning session for a "Cinco de Mayo" event, the new chamber's first major fundraiser that was scheduled to take place May 6.

At the meeting she, staff and board members and others brainstormed ideas for auction items and prizes and decided which of them would contact which potential donors.

"Well, we're way ahead of where we were this morning," she said with a smile as the meeting ended.

Shortly before noon, Dombrowski headed for her white Toyota, notable for its "CHAMBER" license plate, and drove less than half a mile up Main Street to Angelo's Restaurant for a lunch with business owners and Glastonbury High School business students taking part in a program in which they learn about entrepreneurship firsthand from successful business owners.

The program, under the supervision of Mary Brandt-White, a business teacher at the high school, connects students with business owners who work with them to help them learn about starting a new business. Dombrowski, a member of the school's curriculum development committee, helped start the program two years ago. The chamber recruits mentors in a variety of careers and matches them up with students in the high school's entrepreneurship class. The collaboration will end later this spring with a "Shark Tank" session sponsored by the chamber.

The students and mentors had been in touch by email; the luncheon was their first face-to-face meeting.

After lunch, Dombrowski returned to her office, where she learned her last meeting had been cancelled and spent the rest of the afternoon drafting a letter to be used to solicit prizes for the Cinco de Mayo event and returning emails and phone calls. GL

Mary Ellen Dombrowski's day usually begins around 9 a.m.

Members and staff of the Connecticut River Valley Chamber of Commerce meet to plan the chamber's Cinco de Mayo auction.

Photos by Nancy Thompson

Dombrowski and Guy DiBella, director of college relations for Goodwin College in East Hartford, discuss the new chamber's Cinco de Mayo auction.

Dombroski's license plate announces her presence wherever she goes.

Dombrowski leaves for a lunch with students and business owners with a portable sound system in tow.

Dombrowski welcomes Glastonbury High School business students in an entrepreneurial program and their mentors to a lunch at Angelo's Restaurant.

Dombrowski talks with Mike "Ski" Chemerynski, owner of Hair Today. He is one of the mentors working with high school students learning about starting and running a business.

Dombrowski spends a lot of time each day on the phone and exchanging emails with business owners and others in the community.

News roundup

Activists honored

Deb and Steve Dauphinais, owners of Bicycle East, have received the Environmental Excellence Award given each year by the Connecticut Audubon Society Center at Glastonbury. The award honors companies, groups and individuals who demonstrate responsibility and integrity toward the environment.

The couple, whose business was voted America's best bike shop, volunteers in many community activities, including safety programs for children and youths, with Bike Walk Glastonbury and on the town's bicycle advisory board. Deb Dauphinais helped write the town's master bicycle plan and worked to install "Share the Road" signs throughout the community.

Farm and Folk poster winner

Paul Misciagno of Strand Salon has designed the winning poster for this year's CT Farm & Folk Festival. The popular event, sponsored by the CT River Valley Chamber of Commerce, will take place June 4 on the grounds of the Glastonbury Elks Lodge in South Glastonbury. The contest was sponsored by Bodeau Realty Group at William Raveis.

Doing good on spring break

Several students spent their spring break working with town staff to weed and edge the beds at Smith Middle School and apply a fresh coating of mulch to beds. The activity was part of an annual program sponsored by the town's parks and recreation department to give students an opportunity to earn money and work experience while helping the community.

"It is especially gratifying to have SMS graduates working on our grounds at SMS," Smith Principal Donna Schilke said. "That the connections continue is so important and what you hope to instill in your students and the pride the students take in their work is really special."

A new kind of "walking shorts"

The Welles-Turner Memorial Library is sponsoring a "Walking Shorts Book Club" starting June 13. Participants in the walk, on some of the town's scenic paths near the town center and the library, will talk about selected short stories. The program will continue June 27, July 18, and Aug. 1 and 15. Walking shoes are recommended. Multiple copies of the selected short stories are available two weeks before each discussion on a first-come, first -serve basis. Light refreshments will be served, and registration is not necessary. For details, visit wtmlib.info or call the reference desk at 860-652-7720.

Time to trim trees

Crews will be trimming trees along more than five miles of Eversource power lines through the end of June. The work, which was scheduled to begin in the middle of May, will take place on Shallowbrook Lane, Indian Hill Trail, Mountain Road, Line Street, Manchester Road, Natchaug Drive, Timrod Trail, Woodhaven Road and Minnechaug Drive.

Courtesy photo

Anyone with questions about the project can call Greg Foran, the town's tree warden, at 860-652-7686.

Saunig is a candidate

Matt Saunig will run for the town's 31st General Assembly District seat. Saunig, an attorney with a financial services company in Tolland, grew up in Manchester. He and his wife, Ellen, moved to Glastonbury in 2014. He graduated from the University of Connecticut and the Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law, where he was recognized for his contributions to the law school community. He is a member of the public buildings commission and has served on the town's ethics commission. **GL**

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June calendar

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

1 **Student art show,** 2:30 to 7 p.m., Glastonbury High School art department, second floor. Glastonburyus.org.

3 **Early morning bird walk with Sara Zagorski,** 7:30 a.m., Earle Park next to the CT Audubon Society Center, 1361 Main St. $5 members, $10 non-members. Participants are asked to call 860-633-8402 to confirm. Rain will cancel.

4 **Second Annual Farm & Folk Festival,** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Glastonbury Elks Lodge grounds, 98 Woodland St., South Glastonbury.

Skate competition, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Glastonbury Skate Park, 2143 Main St. Open to all skaters in beginner, advanced beginner and intermediate categories. $5 registration fee for skaters, no charge for spectators. 860-652-7679.

5 **Main Street tree walk with Ed Richardson and Frank Kaputa**, 1 p.m. Meet at Fountain green. Walk is about two miles round-trip. Lhcglastonbury.org.

7

Town plan and zoning commission, 7 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. glastonbury-ct.gov.

11 **Connecticut Open House Day,** 1 to 4 p.m., Welles-Shipman-Ward House, 972 Main St., South Glastonbury. No charge. Hsg.org or 860-633-6890.

12 **Farm fresh tasting featuring Killam & Bassette strawberries dipped in chocolate,** Killam & Bassette fresh ham, and jam bar, hayrides, farm animals, kids' activities, entertainment by Ramblin' Dan Stevens and more, 1 to 4 p.m., Killam & Bassette Farmstead, 14 Tryon St. 860-833-0095 or KBfarmstead@gmail.com.

13 **Board of education,** 7:30 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. 860-652-7961 or glastonburyus.org.

14 **Town council,** 7 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. 860-652-7710 or glastonbury-ct.gov.

15 **Bereavement support group sponsored by Hartford HealthCare at Home Hospice Care,** 2 to 3:30 p.m., Riverfront Community Center, 300 Welles St.

17 **Relay for Life of Glastonbury,** open at 3 p.m. with opening ceremony at 6 p.m.

followed by the survivor lap, Riverfront Community Center, 300 Welles St. Event continues on June 18. Relayforlife.org/glastonburyct or 800-227-2345.

18 **Relay for Life of Glastonbury 5K road race,** 9 a.m., Riverfront Community Center, 300 Welles St. Relayforlife.org/glastonburyct or 800-227-2345.

11th Annual Under the Strawberry Moon Festival, 6 to 10 p.m., town center. Rain date June 25. glastonburytci.org.

Connecticut Children's Identification Program sponsored by Glastonbury Orthodontics, noon to 3 p.m., Glastonbury Orthodontics, 277 New London Turnpike. 860-430-9889 or glastonburyorthodontics.com.

19 **Fathers Who Inspire, an exhibit of portraits by Lynn Damon**, 2 to 4 p.m., Congregational Church of South Glastonbury, 949 Main St. 860-803-3777 or Lynn@LynnDamon.com

21 **Town plan and zoning commission**, 7 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. glastonbury-ct.gov.

Inaugural CT River Valley Classic Golf Tournament sponsored by the CT River Valley Chamber of Commerce, Glastonbury Hills Country Club. Registration 11 a.m. followed by lunch, putting contest, shotgun start, reception and dinner, awards and raffle drawings. $175 includes 18 holes with cart. Crvchamber.org.

25 **Genealogy group sponsored by the Welsh Society of Western New England**, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Participants are asked to bring their Welsh family tree and a lunch dish to share. Reserve a spot by emailing WelshWNE@gmail.com. Directions will be forwarded at that time

27 **Board of education,** 7:30 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. 860-652-7961 or glastonburyus.org.

28 **Town council,** 7 p.m., town hall council chambers, 2155 Main St. 860-652-7710 or glastonbury-ct.gov. **GL**

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Events spotlight

Militia Day

Second Annual Farm & Folk Festival

June 4, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Grounds of the Glastonbury Elks Lodge, 98 Woodland St.
Crvchamber.org
or 860-659-3587

The festival, which celebrates the rich farming heritage of the town and the state, became a local tradition after it debuted last year. It will feature 15 gourmet food trucks, a dozen musical acts on two stages, a farmer's market and other family-friendly activities.

Militia Day

June 4, 1 to 4 p.m.
Welles-Shipman-Ward House, 972 Main St.
Hsg.org or 860-633-6890

Visitors are invited to step back in time to watch as a colonial militia unit drills on the grounds of the Historical Society of Glastonbury's property. The event includes house and barn tours and a cooking demonstration. General parking is at St. Augustine Church, 55 Hopewell St. Handicapped parking is available on the property. $5.

Hot Button" issues pertaining to Islam and Muslims

June 6, 7 p.m.
The Congregational Church in South Glastonbury, 949 Main St.
Southcongregational.org
or 860-633-4651.

Reza Mansoor, a Hartford-area cardiologist and a founding member of the Muslim Coalition, will be the guest speaker at this event, one in a series of talks at the church by coalition members. The talk is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served.

Traditional afternoon tea

June 18, 2 to 4 p.m.
Congregational Church in South Glastonbury's social hall
Ctaudubon.org
or 860-633-8402

This traditional tea, sponsored by the Connecticut Audubon Society Center at Glastonbury, will feature a variety of afternoon tea sandwiches, including those with traditional fillings. Betty Johnson of Bigelow tea will talk about the history and health benefits of teas. Tea samples will be given to all guests, and a teacup auction will feature a group of gift baskets. Tickets are $25. Guests must make reservations by June 10. **GL**

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Summer Life

SPECIAL SECTION OF

TurleyCT Community Publications

TurleyCT.com | June 2016

Getting your GOLF ON

Tips on making the most of the season

by Nancy Thompson and Alicia B. Smith
Staff Writers

There's nothing like the green of summer, unless it's the "greens" of summer on area golf courses.

Once considered to be a game for the elite, golf's appeal has expanded to youths, seniors and players who don't get out often.

Professionals at courses in the area are always looking to attract new golfers and to help their players enhance their skills and add to their enjoyment of the game.

In Glastonbury, Jim Tennant, the PGA professional at Minnechaug Golf Course, is working to encourage golfers of all ages and ability levels to enjoy the game at the nine-hole course. He understands what the course is and what it isn't, and has helped make the par-35 Minnechaug course a place where people who are learning to play, women and older golfers feel welcome and respected.

Dan Butler, director of golf at Tower Ridge Country Club in Simsbury, suggests golfers look over their equipment to ensure they have what is needed and update outdated equipment. "Technology is changing the game," Butler said.

Once out on the course, Butler suggested that golfers find a place where they feel comfortable. "Play the right set of tees," he said. "Don't go all the way back in the tee boxes."

As tempting as it is to head to the local course, Ryan Kane, manager at Rolling Greens Golf Club in Rocky Hill, suggested that every player, regardless of skill level, take some time at a driving range.

"You want to stay positive when playing golf," Kane said. "It's definitely better to shake the cobwebs off and practice a little bit."

New to the game?

Our experts encourage brand-new golfers to take lessons. "It could be a group lesson or a private lesson, but it doesn't have to be one-on-one," Tennant said. "New golfers need to learn enough fundamentals to enjoy themselves out there." He often suggests that beginners play later in the day, even at twilight, when the course is less crowded and they will be less stressed. "Don't come Saturday morning," he said.

Rich Crowe, golf pro at Rockledge Golf Club in West Hartford, agreed. "For somebody getting into the sport, taking lessons early on would be something I would encourage them to do," he said.

Butler agreed, suggesting that lessons from a professional would serve a new golfer well.

Golf equipment doesn't need to be a budget-buster.

"You don't have to spend an outrageous amount of money," Butler said. "I don't think anyone personally should spend full retail on golf equipment. It's outrageous, the cost. There are plenty of places who sell used or new equipment at a discounted price."

Kane suggested that once new golfers have a feel for how to hit the ball, they can try an executive course, a par-3 shorter course, before trying their luck at a longer 18-hole. "Play with your friends so you can get the proper etiquette and pace of play," he said.

John Tatakis III is the manager at Connecticut Golf Academy, which has a driving range and practice space for putting and chipping and

Making the most of your green fees

Green fees vary by course and often by day and time. Here are some suggestions from the professionals for getting the most for your money.

Look for deals. Some courses offer season passes. Discounts are often available on the course's website.

Show up a half-hour early so you can practice a few putts. That way you won't spend the first few holes getting used to the game.

If you're open to playing any time, play on off-peak days and hours.

The Golf Now app, which Minnechaug Golf Course and many others in the area use, may offer discounts such as a reduced fee for nine holes with a cart or two rounds for the price of one.

other elements of the short game. He suggested that new golfers start at a driving range and sign up for lessons to learn the fundamentals.

Weekend warrior?

Weekend golfers should plan ahead and book a tee time in advance so they're not disappointed when they arrive or shut out of playing altogether. "Every course has a little different policy," Tennant said. "There's an app for Android and iPhone that lets people book tee times seven days in advance."

Kane also suggested booking tee times in advance. "If you are playing a course for the first time check out their website, look at the course layout so you know what you are up against, especially on a course where it is the first time you play," he said.

Crowe recommended finding time to practice parts of the game. This could be a half-hour at the Rockledge driving range or some time on its practice putting green or at West Hartford's 9-hole course, Buena Vista Golf Course.

"Buena Vista is a little more laid back," Crowe said. "A lot of beginners go out of there. It's a little bit shorter, easier to get around."

Practicing at home is an option as well, Butler said.

"You can find 10 to 15 minutes a day to hit some putts in the living room or swing in front of a mirror," he said. "You don't have to be playing golf to get better at playing golf."

Tatakis said a nine-hole or executive course would be good for golfers who won't have time to play as often as they'd like and also enable players to get a good handle on their game before they go on to an 18-hole course.

The regulars

Tennant said daily or almost-daily golfers tend to play the same course and know when the quiet times are. They also may have a relationship with the staff, which can be important. "The staff and the golfers get to really know each other," he said. "We will always bend over backward for that regular customer."

Keeping in shape is important.

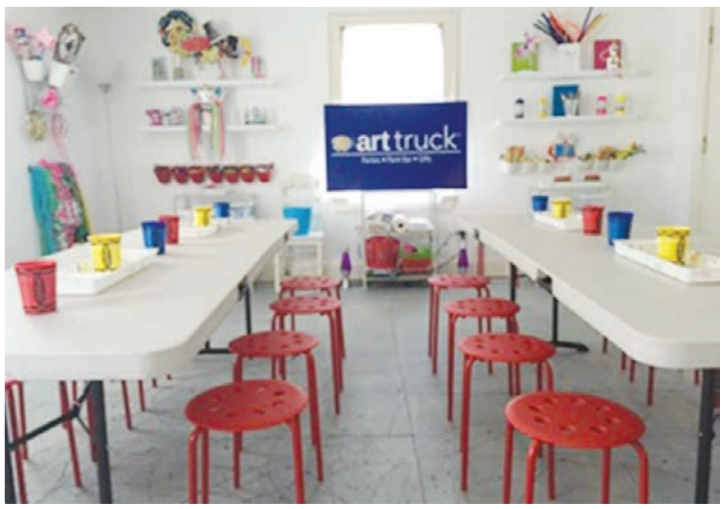
Crowe often suggests that golfers work out in the winter, and focus on stretching, all of which will help when the season starts in the spring.

He said it's a good idea to come to the course about a half hour early before their tee time to have a chance to do some stretching, hit a few balls on the driving range and practice putting before teeing off for good.

"If you are playing on a daily basis, it's all about having fun," Butler said. "It's only a game. No matter what happens on a golf course, the course is going to stay there and you are the one who played bad. Remember, it's only a game and you can always come back to it."

Kane said regular golfers can look around for a golf league because playing with a group often provides motivation.

Tatakis likes variety. "I would suggest people try different types of



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Minnechaug Golf Course
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courses, different layouts rather than playing the same course over and over," he said.

Get 'em while they're young

Many young golfers are introduced to the sport through their parents or grandparents.

Crowe suggested letting young children hit balls on the driving range or watch golfers practice rather than starting lessons too soon.

"It needs to be fun for them," he said, adding that West Hartford offers a number of learning opportunities for youngsters to learn the sport, including summer programs.

Tatakis believes children who have expressed an interest in learning the sport would benefit from a group lesson. "That definitely helps their experience," he said.

Once a child has expressed interest in the sport, parents should invest in a set of junior clubs, a better option then cutting down a set of clubs that once belonged to an adult. "It's going to be easier for the child to strike the ball and get the ball in the air," Crowe said.

Butler has seen children as young as 3 get started in the game, but warned that parents should not press their children to take up the sport.

If children take a serious interest in the game, then parents can consider purchasing a junior set of clubs. "Kids having their own set of clubs, that is the right fit, is only going to benefit them," he said.

"My father put a golf club in my hand, I think I was 3 years old," Kane said, adding that it is not uncommon to start children in the sport at such a young age.

The younger they are, Kane said, the better opportunity they will have to develop their own natural swing.

"You can play golf your entire life, at every level, at every age," he said.

Tennant said young golfers also like to know when the quiet times are. "If they don't, they might want to check with the staff to find out when the best time for them to play would be," he said, adding that, while public courses are less expensive than private facilities, that doesn't mean they're easier. "It's best to ask," he said, adding that Minnechaug is considered to be user-friendly. "Some can be really intimidating." **GL**

Equipment

We've all seen the pros on television with their color-coordinated outfits, bags full of clubs and top-notch balls. What do the rest of us really need to bring? Here are some tips from area professionals.

For beginners and youths, the fewer clubs, the better. New golfers need a few irons, a putter, a wedge, a 3- or 5-wood for the tee, and possibly a hybrid club to get them out of trouble.

More serious players will want to add clubs but should check with their course pro who has watched them play and might have suggestions about club length or additional clubs.

For most players, sneakers are fine. Comfort should be the most important consideration.

The average golfer will not notice the difference between top-of-the-line balls and everything else, so try the value packs.

Wear a hat and use sunscreen. Consider clothing that protects skin from the harmful effects of ultraviolet rays.

Bring water. Some courses provide water, but bring your own just in case.

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SUMMER -Times-

❑ **Kenn Morr Band** performing original folk/rock/Americana music Friday, June 3 at 7 p.m. at Lost Acres Vineyard, 80 Lost Acres Road, North Granby, tickets $10, 860-324-9481 – touring in support of its latest release, "Afterimage," recorded live at Sandy Brook Studios in Colebrook

❑ **Dinner and a Show** Saturday, June 4 at First Church of Christ, Unionville, 61 Main St., Unionville – dinner from 5:30-6:30 p.m., Irish music by the Jolly Beggars, tickets $15/$12/$8 (860-673-2796)

❑ **Infinity Hall music calendars:**
20 Greenwoods Road North, Norfolk
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June 4, 8 p.m., Garcia Project, $24/$34; June 10, 8 p.m., Valerie June, $24/$34; June 11, 8 p.m., Ana Popovic, $39/$59; June 17, 8 p.m., Southern Comfort Band, $15/$25; June 18, 8 p.m., Buckwheat Zydeco, $40/$55; June 19, 8 p.m., Little River Band, $59/$69/$84; June 24, 8 p.m., Michael Allman, $29/$44; June 25, 8 p.m., Kashmir – Led Zeppelin Tribute, $35/$50
32 Front St., Hartford June 3, 8:30 p.m., Richie Furay, $39/$59; June 4, 8 p.m., Garcia Project, $24/$34; June 5, 7:30 p.m., Richard Thompson, $49/$69/$84; June 10, 8 p.m., Tusk – Fleetwood Mac Tribute, $35/$50; June 11, 8 p.m., David Cassidy, $54/$79; June 17, 8:30 p.m., Boston Comedy Festival's Dial 617 Comedy, $25/$35; June 18, 8 p.m., Little River Band, $59/$69/$84; June 24, 8:30 p.m., Tommy Emmanuel, $55/$75; June 26, 7:30 p.m., Blues Brothers Revue, $44/$64; June 30, 8 p.m., Love Canon, $19/$29

❑ **Sacred Music at the Red Door** final concert of the season, "Pipes Alive," featuring St. John's Episcopal Church organist Scott Lamlein Sunday, June 5, 12:30 p.m., at the church, 679 Farmington Ave., West Hartford

❑ **"American Salute" by the Farmington Valley Symphony Orchestra** outdoor concert Sunday, June 5, 4 p.m., on the lawn at First Church of Christ, Congregational, 75 Main St., Farmington, tickets $18/$15 online at www.fvso.org, $20 at the concert (860-975-FVSO)

❑ **"The Israel of Things" orchestral concert** at Beth El Temple, 2626 Albany Ave., West Hartford, Sunday, June 5, 7 p.m. in honor of "Jerusalem Reunification Day" – Israeli pianist Boaz Sharon, Israeli violinist Kobi Malkin, Israeli vocalist Gon Halevi, with Joseph Ness conducting the Beth El Orchestra, tickets $20/$15 for seniors and students (860-233-9696)

❑ At the **Mark Twain House**, 351 Farmington Ave., Hartford,
•Tom Sawyer Day – Wild about Animals! Saturday, June 11, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., musical performances, part of Connecticut Open House day, free admission (discounted tours of House available)
•Graveyard Ghost Tours Friday, June 24 and Saturday, June 25, and Friday and Saturday, July 29 and 30, at 6, 7, 8 and 9 p.m., tickets $22/$17/$15, 860-247-0998
•CLUE Tours of Mark Twain House Thursday, July 28, every 15 minutes starting at 7 p.m., featuring Sea Tea Improv, tickets $22/$17/$15, 860-247-0998
•Tanglewood Marionettes presents "An Arabian Adventure" Saturday, July 30, 2 p.m., tickets $1
•It's in the Bag by the National Theatre of the Deaf Saturday, Aug. 13, 2 p.m., tickets $10/$5
•Family Series presents Pete & Chris' Magic Show Saturday, Aug. 20, 2 p.m., tickets $10/$5, 860-247-0998

❑ **Hartford Symphony Orchestra's "An American in Paris: World Winds"** June 9-12 in Belding Theater at The Bushnell in Hartford, Thursday at 7:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m., tickets starting at $35, $10 for students with ID, 860-987-5900

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❑ **An Evening with Taylor, Chapin & EVA** Friday, June 10, 7:30 p.m., at Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center, 22 Iron Horse Boulevard, Simsbury, tickets $55/$35/$25 – featuring Livingston Taylor and Tom Chapin

❑ **Acoustic Nights at Winding Trails** 50 Winding Trails Drive, Farmington, on Nature's Porch, 860-677-8458, all ages, $6/$4:
•June 10, 7 p.m., Blackberry Jam, Podunk Throwbacks and Belle of the Fall
•July 29, 7 p.m., Blackberry Jam, Nightcap and Jeff Przech

❑ **Little Theatre of Manchester's "Clybourne Park"** June 10-12, 17-19 and 24-26 at Cheney Hall, 177 Hartford Road, Manchester, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m., tickets $19-$25 at 860-647-9824; opening night June 10 pre-show dinner and lecture from local author and theater historian David Garnes, dinner $15 with discount for subscribers beginning at 6:30 p.m.

❑ **Hartt Community Division Dance Department's "The Red Shoes"** June 10-12 at the University of Hartford's Millard Auditorium, 200 Bloomfield Ave., West Hartford, performances Friday at 7:30 p.m., Saturday at 2 and 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m., tickets at 1-800-274-8587, hartford.edu.hcd

❑ **Warner Theatre,** 68 Main St., Torrington, 860-489-7180 or warnertheatre:
•"Over the River and Through the Woods" June 11-19 in the Nancy Marine Studio Theatre, performances Saturdays, June 11 and 18 at 8 p.m., Sundays June 12 and 19 at 2 p.m. and Friday, June 17 at 8 p.m.
•Melissa Etheridge (presented by Infinity Hall) Friday, June 15, 8 p.m.
•"Seussical: The Musical" on the main stage July 30-Aug. 7

❑ **U.S. Coast Guard Saxophone Quartet** Tuesday, June 14, 6:30 p.m., on the lawn of the Barney Library, 71 Main St., Farmington, register at 860-673-6791

❑ **"A Chorus Line"** at Playhouse on Park, 244 Park Road, West Hartford, June 17-July 31 with previews June 15 and 16 tickets $15, opening night June 17 with wine and cheese reception before show, thereafter performances Wednesdays and Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. followed by talk back, special Tuesday matinee June 28 at 2 p.m., tickets $32.50-$45

❑ **Talcott Mountain Music Festival** at the Performing Arts Center at Simsbury Meadows on Iron Horse Boulevard, Simsbury, July 1-29, single tickets adult lawn $20 ($25 at the gate), child lawn (12 and under) $5, single table seat $40 ($45 at the gate), full table (8 seats) $320 ($360 at the gate), call 860-987-5900
• Celebrate America! Friday, July 1, 7:30 p.m., rain date July 2, 7:30 p.m., fireworks after the concert
•Starlets – The Women of Song Friday, July 8, 7:30 p.m., rain date July 9, hits from most popular divas over the past five decades
•Appalachian Spring Friday, July 15, rain date July 16 – Aaron Copland's seminary piece, along with Tchaikovsky's "Serenade" and a Mozart piece
•A Tribute to Ray Charles, Motown and Beyond Friday, July 22, 7:30 p.m., rain date July 23
•Faithfully – A Symphonic Tribute to the Music of Journey Friday, July 29, 7:30 p.m., rain date July 30

❑ **Friends of Heublein Tower's Hike to the Mic** Aug. 27 and 28, noon-sunset at Heublein Tower, with special Sunday morning jazz from 10 a.m.-noon curated by Kris Jensen and Chris Casey and featuring local jazz greats – headlining: the McLovins, also on the bill: Will Evans, Atlas Grey, Wise Old Moon, Photosynthesis, Kais & Dollz, The KC Sisters, The Girls from Ruby Falls, Belle of the Fall, Now for Ages, Ragtop Doozey and The Michael Cleary Band **GL**

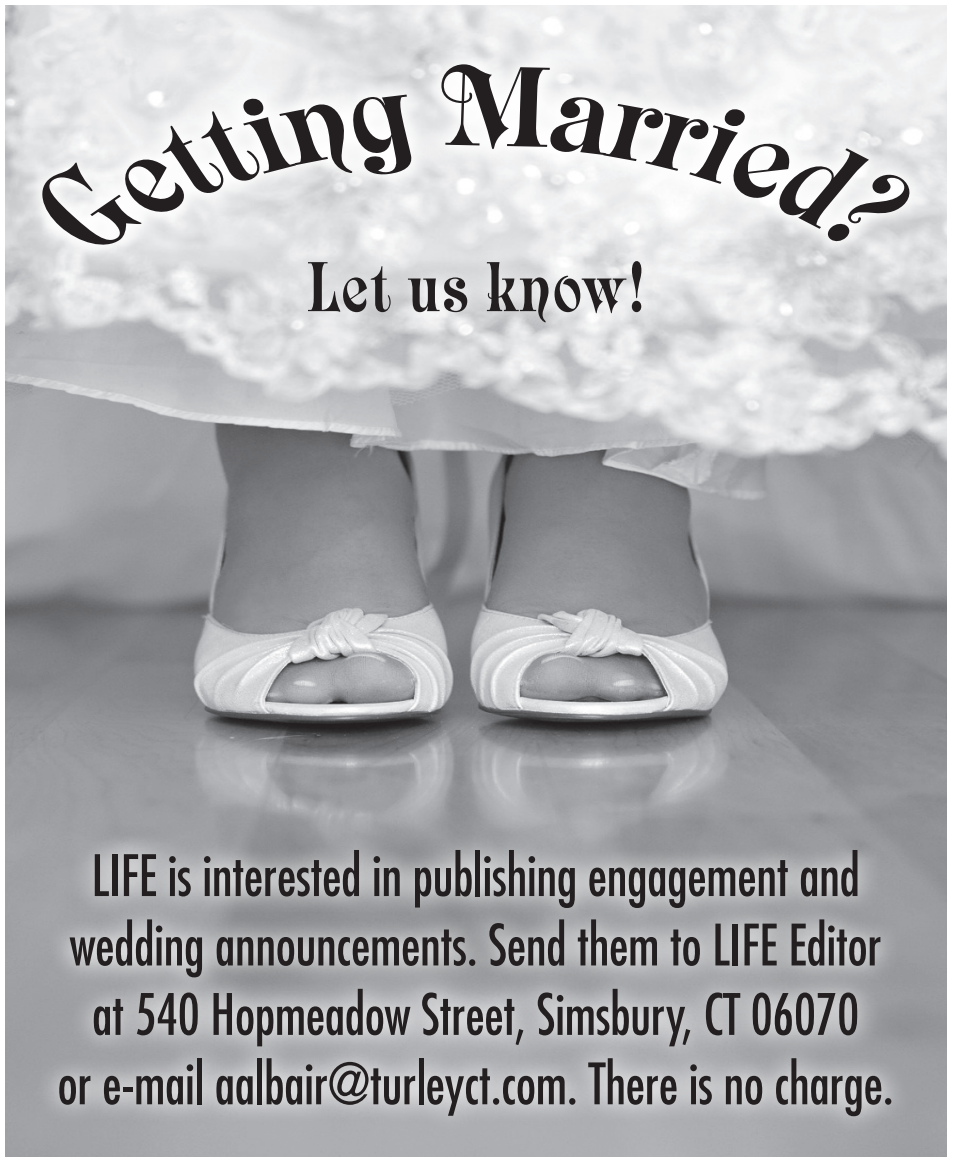
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Photo by Robert Vargas

EXPLORE THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Options for hikers of all ages and abilities

by Sloan Brewster
Staff Writer

There are hiking trails aplenty in Connecticut.

"The whole Farmington Valley is blessed with a plethora," said Jay Kaplan, executive director of the Roaring Brook Nature Center, Canton and member of the Canton Land Trust.

The trails are usually blazed with markings on trees, for many of the trail systems in Connecticut and beyond, including the Metacomet and Tunxis Trails, both of which run through the Farmington Valley with blazes that are light blue. The Appalachian Trail, which is primarily in the western portion of the state and stretches 2,180 miles from Georgia to Maine, is white.

According to the Connecticut Forest and Park Association's web-

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site, the blazes are placed on trails by volunteers. Generally, the marks are painted on trees and are 2 inches wide and 6 inches high.

A single vertical blaze indicates that the hiker should continue in the same direction. Two blazes, one up and to the left of the other, means to take a left turn while two blazes, one up and to the right of the other, means a right turn.

Two horizontal blazes, one above the other, mean the trail has ended.

Based on terrain, scenery and accommodations, different trails are better for different levels of hiking and for folks with various types and depths of experience.

Be sure to bring water, healthy snacks such as energy or granola bars, or popcorn or peanuts in plastic bags and a first aid kit. Some folks also like to bring a compass or trail maps and, as Kaplan suggested, a few dollars for ice cream after the hike.

"Bring a cell phone in case you get lost or hurt," Kaplan said. "We don't want you to leave it on and be texting the whole time."

Families

There are a few things to consider when planning a hike for a family, according to Kaplan and Laurie Giannotti of the Connecticut State Parks Trails & Greenways Program for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

The first thing is the children's ages.

"If you have young children, you would want a relatively short, flat trail that they can do," Kaplan said, advising it be terrain where the parents won't be forced to carry the little ones.

Also, make sure the trail is for foot traffic only and not for equestrians, at least if it's the first time for the family, Giannotti said.

Kaplan suggested the Werner Pond Trail, a half mile trail at Roaring Brook Nature Center. For a flat hike that's longer, try Fisher Meadows in Avon or check out the trails at Great Pond in Simsbury.

He also suggested trying state parks and local land trust trails.

For teenagers or more active children, try the Mile of Ledges in Burlington, or take a jaunt up Talcott Mountain in Avon to the Heublein Tower.

Kaplan also suggested checking out the Hedgehog Trail in West Simsbury, which follows the ridge of West Mountain. One idea he had was to take two cars and park one at the trailhead on Saddle Ridge Drive and then pack everyone into the second car and drive it to The Master's School, where the other end of the

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trail begins, and hike back to the first car.

The Canton Land Trust maintains a few trails as well, Kaplan said, suggesting the Ray Smith Trail at the Mary Conklin Sanctuary.

"That's a really easy trail for people," he said.

The Sun, Wind and Woodland property also has family friendly trails.

The Simsbury Land Trust also has trails, including Tanager Hill, he said.

Trails at state parks and forests are great for families because they have restroom accommodations and picnic areas, Giannotti said. She suggested Fort Trumbull State Park in New London, Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park in Groton, or Dinosaur State Park in Rocky Hill.

Fort Trumbull has a walk along the river, interpretive trails with signage and picnic spots.

For an experience in a more forested setting, try Chatfield Hollow State Park in Killingworth or Stratton Brook State Park in Simsbury, Giannotti said. Goodwin State Forest in Hampton is an excellent state forest with lots of loops for kids and has facilities.

"The state parks are the best choices," she said. "There's usually a bathroom."

For an easier hike, try one of the many rail trails in the state, Giannotti said.

"Rail trails are all great for families and people who don't want to have to worry about where to go," she said.

For beginners, Giannotti highly recommended stopping by one of the forests or parks on National Trails Day Saturday, June 4 or Sunday, June 5.

"If you want to show up on Trails Day, you'll have an advantage of a guided hike," she said. "You can learn how to read the trial blazes, and where to go and where not to go."

Questions athletes need to ask before choosing a trail

For hiking, the Mile of Ledges, Talcott Mountain and Hedgehog are also great trails for athletes, Kaplan said.

"They're not like hiking the Appalachian Trail up Bear Mountain, but we don't have that here," he said.

Penwood State Park in Bloomfield also has trails suitable for athletic hikers.

"You could actually do the Metacomet Trail," Kaplan said.

The Metacomet, which runs through Penwood, begins in Farmington and runs all the way to the Massachusetts state line.

The Tunxis Trail, which runs through Farmington into Burlington and Barkhamsted, is another option.

For hills, Giannotti recommended Chatfield Hollow in Killingworth. There are narrow, winding uphill trails.

"Basically, you can get into Cockaponset [State Forest]," she said. "And then you can go for a swim."

She also recommended Macedonia State Park in Kent.

"That part of the stare offers our steepest, rockiest, diverse habitat," Giannotti said.

Gay City State Park in Hebron and Devil's Hopyard in East Haddam are good ones, too.

"Salmon River State Forest has a lot of great hiking in it too," Giannotti said.

According to the DEEP's website, Salmon River contains nearly 6,000 acres in the towns of Hebron, Marlborough, Colchester, East Haddam and East Hampton.

Athletic hikers should look for trails that will test their endurance, Giannotti said.

Sessions Woods in Burlington has hiking trails, Kaplan said.

It also has gravel trails that are good for running and bike trails that wind through the woods and can also be used for hiking and have decent terrain for running.

Reservoir 6 in West Hartford also has a flat trail that's good for running, Kaplan said. It's four miles long and goes around the reservoir.

Rail Trails, which run across the state and can be picked up in multiple towns, are also good for runners.

Of course, not all runners want to take flat trails.

"People, to get in shape, run up

the Talcott Mountain," Kaplan said.

It's not just about endurance or distance, however. Hikers should look for trails with scenic overlooks, waterfalls, or wildlife.

"Trap rock ridges are ideal for that," Kaplan said.

Talcott Mountain, Penwood or Hedgehog have trails along trap rock ridges.

Great Pond has a flat two-mile trail where beavers and other wildlife can sometimes be seen, he said.

Those with canine companions

Folks with dogs can hike pretty much anywhere they would go without them, with a few exceptions and conditions, Kaplan and Giannotti said. First and foremost, the dogs must be leashed at most locations.

All state parks and forests require leashes, as much for the dogs' protection as for that of passersby and wildlife, they said. Dogs are allowed to roam free on some land trust properties.

"Dogs, anytime you're on state property, you have to be on leash," Giannotti said. "Number one, the bears can kill your dog ... [Number two], dogs chase the animals ... even a well behaved dog is going to chase a squirrel. Dogs kill animals."

Giannotti takes her dog to places where there is a lake, such as Cockaponset, so she can let it off leash to go for a swim and then put it back on the leash to continue hiking.

Choose hiking areas for dogs takes the same considerations as when taking children, Kaplan said. Assess its health and age and choose a location based on those factors

"If your dog is old, you don't want to hike it all the way up to Heublein Tower," he said. "Dogs have to be in shape just like people."

Bear in mind the weather as well and make sure there's a way to keep Fido hydrated.

"If it's 100 degrees, you don't want to be hiking your dog," Kaplan said. "Bring water unless you know there's a water source."

The elderly

As with dogs and children, choosing a hike for someone elderly depends on the individual's health, stamina and physical fitness.

The short trail at Roaring Brook is a good option for someone who wants a short, relatively flat, hike, Kaplan said. If a half mile seems a bit too short, the two-mile trail at Great Pond is also flat. If that's a bit too much, simply go some of the distance and turn back.

"You don't have to do the whole loop," Kaplan said.

Westmoor Park in West Hartford has some trails, he said.

According to the Westmoor Park website, the trails there range between .4 mile and about one mile. The trails are safe and easily accessible.

Rail trails are perfect for older folks looking to do some walking, Giannotti said. Chattfield Hollow has a nice forest road system that's flat and is an easy loop around the pond.

She reiterated that state parks have restroom facilities, which can be helpful for elderly adventurers.

For bird watching, sightseeing

Spring is the perfect time of year for bird watching, and Kaplan is already gearing up for some early morning bird walks.

"Great varieties of birds are seen where there's a variety of habitats," he said.

Woodland areas or brushy overgrown fields are good for bird watching and Kaplan has a special spot where he enjoys going.

"Cedar Hill Cemetery in the south end of Hartford," he said. "It's a magnet for birds."

Rail trails are good for bird watching, Giannotti said, suggesting the Airline Trail in Lebanon.

"There's a heron rookery that you walk straight through," she said.

Bluff Point State Park in Groton, Farm River State Park in East Haven and Herd State Park in East Hampton are also good for birding, Giannotti said.

Dress for birding should include foot wear that can get wet, bug repellent and a hat.

For sightseeing hikes, try some of the historic sites in the state where there are old homes with diverse plantings or interesting places to visit and trails to traverse, Giannotti said. She suggested Topmead State Forest in Litchfield or Beckley Furnace State Park in Old Canaan.

"[At Beckley], there is a monument and there is a waterfall," she said. "It's a good one to go to."

Osbornedale State Park in Derby is an old homestead, has facilities and nice trails and a museum.

Talcott Mountain, which has a trail up to the historic Heublein Tower, is another one, she said, as is the Windsor Locks Canal Trail, a 4.5 mile trail along an old industrial towpath where barges were pulled in Windsor Locks and Suffield 150 years ago. **GL**

For more information on trails maintained by the Canton Land Trust, visit www.cantonlandtrust.org
For information on Simsbury Land Trust properties, visit www.simsburylandtrust.org
To search state parks by activity, visit www.ct.gov
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Summer LIFE

Finding Summer's treasures

The crops are ready at The Pickin' Patch in Avon. Christopher Carville, owner/farm manager, says that strawberries and pumpkins are the most popular to pick.

by Mara Dresner and Allie Rivera
Staff Writers

With the temperatures rising and the days feeling brighter, outdoor family-friendly activities quickly become a preferable option. Throughout the region are a wide variety of activities that will get families off the couch, out the door and enjoying nature in a fun, safe and collaborative way.

While there's no shortage of farm stands in the area, many families may enjoy the experience of heading to the fields themselves to pick their own fruits and berries.

"Pick your own is a big attraction, and we are the only PYO farm in this area. People walk into our store and want to know, 'What can we pick ourselves?' People want fresh produce and the only way to know if something is truly fresh is to pick it yourself," said Christopher Carville, owner/farm manager of The Pickin' Patch in Avon, which is in its 350th year of farming. "Fresh produce appeals to everyone and it's fairly easy to do. Parents come with young children so they can teach them where food comes from. Businesspeople on their way home from work stop in to pick up a few things for dinner. We also have hardcore pickers who come and spend hours picking so they can freeze it for use all year long. [People] like knowing exactly where their food came from and when it was picked. We also have a beautiful location, so people enjoy spending time on our farm."

The Desmarais family of Glastonbury is avid pickers and enjoys trying different farms in the area.

"We prefer our fruits to be fresh and local, and Glastonbury has a lot to offer. We do purchase from the farm stands, but we try to make time most weeks to skip the stand and head to the fields. We consider it a family activity. [There are] no electronic distractions, so we talk and joke as a family while picking. We often make it more fun by having contests, like who can pick the most blueberries or whose strawberry is the biggest," said Dennis Desmarais, who picks with his wife, Lisa, and their daughters, Allison and Josephine. "I think it is important for kids to have an appreciation for where food comes from, and the hard work that farmers and pickers have to do to put food on our plates."

Sandi Rose, member/manager of Rose's Berry Farm LLC in South Glastonbury, said she's noticed some customer favorites.

"Number one would be strawberries, since they are the first fruits available after a long winter; number

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two, blueberries; followed by number three, pumpkins/apples. Fall items have surged in popularity over the last 10 years because most do it as an outing with a group for a fun day in the country," she said.

Carville agreed that strawberries and pumpkins are big draws.

"Strawberries, obviously, because they are delicious and pumpkins because we offer free hayrides to the pumpkin fields for picking in October," said Carville, who suggests not wearing your Sunday best for the activity. "It involves dirt and usually some sweat, so dress appropriately."

Of course, the rewards of PYO are worth a little dirt.

"You can pick the freshest fruit or vegetables plus enjoy being in the country. Another reason is they get to know their farmer and trust them with using safe practices. Also, being able to enjoy the farm atmosphere and nature at its best is always a draw," Rose said. "We as farmers forget that most people don't enjoy the view we do and they enjoy coming just to enjoy being at the farm." For families that want time together outdoors for further bonding, but don't necessarily want a kitchen full of fruit, geocaching and earthcaching are also options to enjoy in the area or around the world.

Geocaching

Geocaching, also known as the world's largest treasure hunt, is all about adventure. A cache is the term used for some kind of treasure, typically a small box with trinkets inside. With geocaching, a cache is placed at a distinct coordinate, and participants can go online to find its location and search for the cache. Once it's found, participants can sign the logbook inside and swap out the trinkets to leave for the next person. The value of the find is not the key to geocaching, it's the adventure.

Similarly, earthcaching provides participants with an explicit location, but the treasure that is found at the end of this journey is of a natural state. Following the location coordinates while earthcaching brings those involved to a geological wonder.

There are numerous earthcaching locations in Connecticut, some of which are located in the Farmington Valley and surrounding area, with one in Talcott Mountain State Park and another in the Old Newgate Mine in East Granby. Further south, Rocky Hill's Dinosaur State Park also offers earthcaching adventures.

More information about earthcaching can be found through the state's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection website, while coordinates for geocaching can be found at www.geocaching.com.

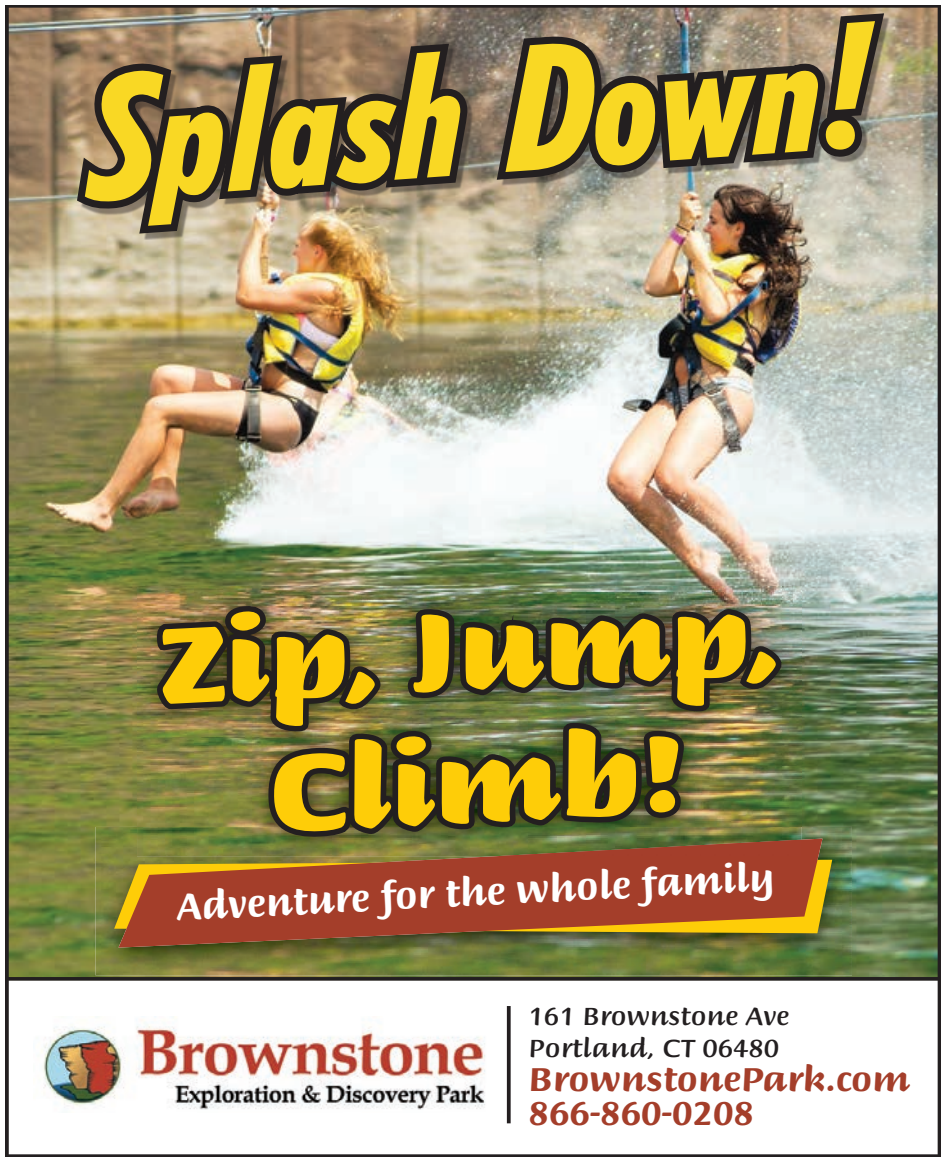
For those who want adventures in a slightly more controlled environment, Dinosaur State Park offers its own version of looking for treasure.

"During the summer we have an outdoor mining activity," Park Manager Meg Enkler said. "Visitors buy a bag of what we call mining rough, so it has fossils, gems or sometimes both."

Participants put this roughage into a trough with water and sift through to find the various trinkets.

"We have little ID kits that were put together by a geologist so they can learn the fossils and gems," Enkler said.

Whatever activity a family chooses, summer is the time to get moving. GL



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Read our publication online at
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KEITH TURLEY, Publisher

EDITORIAL
Abigail Albair, Executive Editor
aalbair@turleyct.com
Nancy Thompson, Editor
Alison Jalbert, Assistant Editor

STAFF WRITERS
Alicia B. Smith, Allie Rivera, Mara Dresner, Sloan Brewster, David Heuschkel

ADVERTISING SALES
Matt Winkler
860-264-5653
matt@turleyct.com

PAGE DESIGNERS
Daniel Kornegay, Cynthia Martel, Robert Sirois

GRAPHICS DEPARTMENT
Barbara Ouellette, Production Manager
ads@turleyct.com, 860-264-5523
Maureen LaBier, Production Assistant
Daniel Kornegay, Corley Fleming, Cynthia Martel, Kathy Kokoszka, Mary Grimes

CIRCULATION
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Note from Nancy

It really is magic

The Disney people like to talk about "magic." Their bus service to and from the airport is the "Magical Express," Cinderella's castle is in the "Magic Kingdom," and their all-knowing and all-powerful silicone bracelets are "magic bands."

I just returned from a trip to Disney World with our daughter and her family, and I've got to say that it's not just hype. The place truly is magical.

I've been there a few times before, but never with children young enough to believe that the princesses – not to mention the assorted mice, ducks, bears, donkeys and baby pigs – are real. I was in tears more than once looking at the world through their eyes.

The first came at the end of the "Frozen" sing-a-long. The girls, who are five and three, are huge "Frozen" fans and can sing pretty much all the songs with the appropriate expressions and hand gestures. The show was terrific, funny and, at least for the adults, punny ("Elsa went to the fjords by herself because she didn't have a fjord escort…"), but I choked up watching our munchkins belt out "Let it Go."

From there, we went to a casual buffet-style restaurant where we met, got autographs from, posed with and hugged Mickey, Minnie, Donald, Daisy, and Goofy. Mickey, no doubt remembering me from my membership in the Mickey Mouse Club 50-plus years ago, greeted me with a huge hug. Choke-up No. 2.

Reporters are supposed to be tough. Obviously, I do not get great reviews for toughness.

The next morning we headed for the Magic Kingdom. We'd seen the spires of Cinderella's castle from afar, but there's a point, turning onto Main Street U.S.A., when you suddenly see it in all its glory. I rushed ahead of the others so I could get a picture of the kids when they spotted the castle. So what does the 5-year-old do? She gets all teary. She insisted she wasn't actually crying, but Gramma knew better. As they say, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. Of course, Gramma, hiding behind her camera, might have had a moist eye or two herself from watching the girls' reaction.

There were others – "It's a Small, Small World" simply because it's so darn adorable and the Lion King festival over in the Animal Kingdom the next day.

"The Lion King" and I have had a special relationship for more than 20 years. The animation, when the film was released in 1994, was way ahead of its time, and the story line hit me in a way that few do. The festival at Disney World was part comedy, part ballet and part Cirque du Soleil-like acrobatics with some great music. And, as I do whenever I hear that opening chant in Zulu that comes right before "The Circle of Life," I got all misty-eyed.

These were all tears of joy, of course. Joy at watching my beloved granddaughters having so much fun; joy at seeing them meet Elsa and Anna, their heroines from Frozen; joy at their reaction to a couple of fairly scary rollercoasters; and even to getting drenched on a river rapids raft ride in the Animal Kingdom.

Once again, as we left I thought of a Dr. Seuss quote that I've come to love: "Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened."

I'm smiling.

– Nancy Thompson

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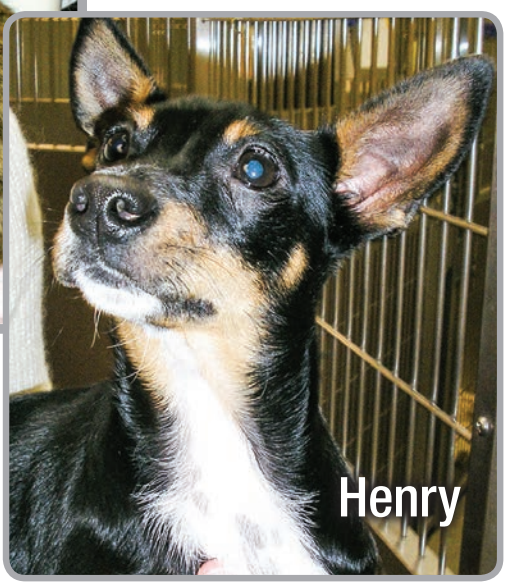

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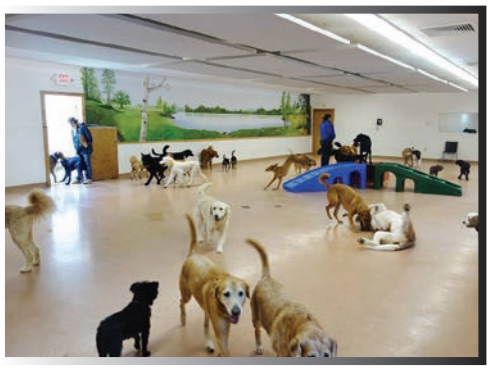

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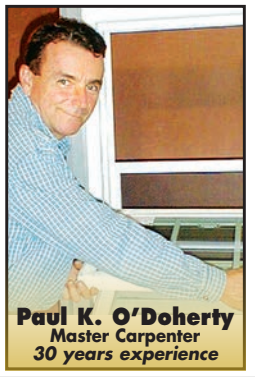

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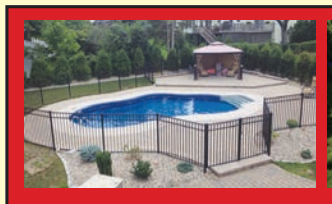

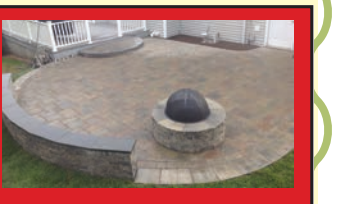

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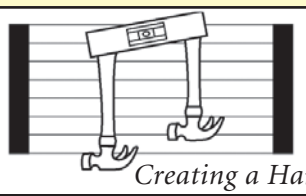

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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]

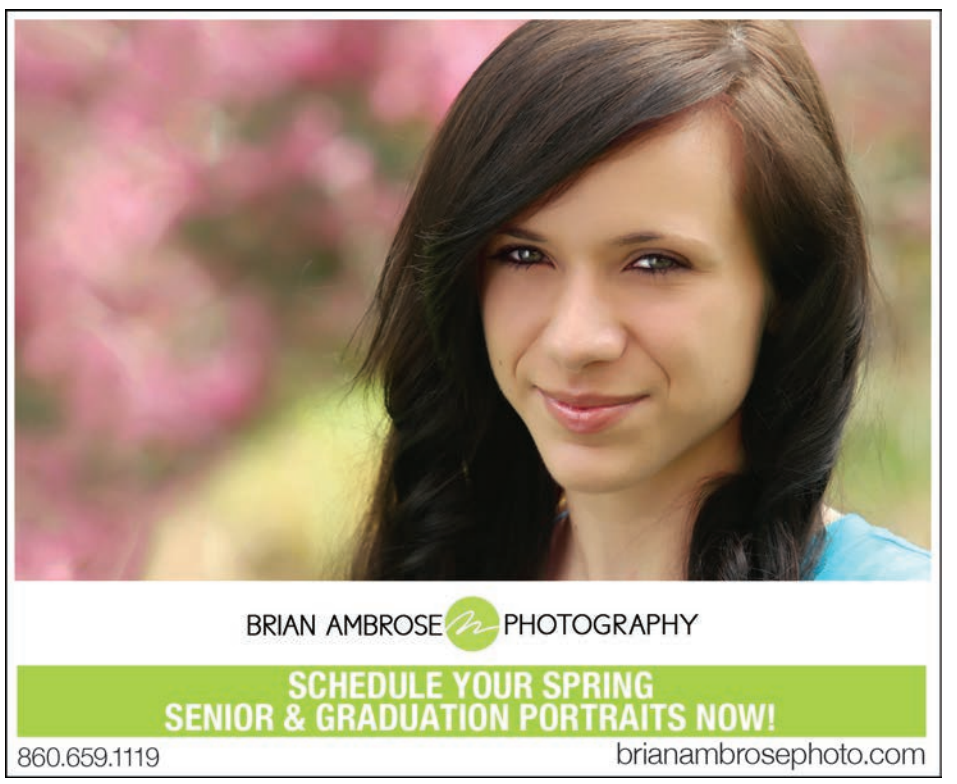
Going into the 2016 Hurricane Season...

The Atlantic Hurricane Season of 2015 featured 11 named storms, 4 reached hurricane status and of those only 2 became MAJOR hurricanes. Furthermore, there were just two (Ana and Bill) that made US landfalls (both as tropical storms).

The list of names last year is one of 6 used in rotation for the Atlantic Basin (including the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean) ... alternating gender, starting at the top of the alphabet. Two names will be retired by the WMO (World Meteorological Organization, a group of international scientists) for the list that will be used again in 2021. Erika will be replaced with "Elsa" and Joaquin will be replaced with "Julian." Names are retired when a storm was either so deadly or costly.

The Atlantic season runs from June 1st through November 30th ... we'll of course keep you updated on any and all development! In fact, Alex already formed (in January, the 1st to do so since 1955 in that month). The complete list is in the graphic above.

Before getting a name, a Tropical Depression forms (they get numbers). An "average season" includes 12 Tropical Storms (wind 39mph or greater), 6 Hurricanes (wind 74mph or greater) and 3 Major Hurricanes (111mph or greater). The initial outlook for 2016 is for the season to be perhaps more active than the past several years. **GL**



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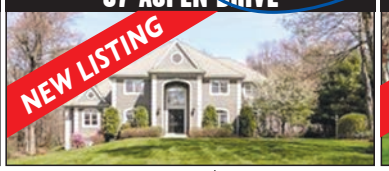
1083 MAIN STREET

South Glastonbury $450,000
Renovated historic home in South Glastonbury, complete with tennis court, in-ground pool & barn. 4 beds; 2 baths; 3272 sq. ft.

37 ASPEN DRIVE



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61 STOCKADE ROAD

South Glastonbury $399,900
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339 DUG ROAD

South Glastonbury $320,000
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55 MARLBOROUGH ROAD

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45 AMANDA WAY

Tolland $569,900
Soaring ceilings and open floor plan invites you upon walking into the Great Room with Fireplace. 4 beds; 3.1 baths; 3908 sq. ft.

186 FELDSPAR RIDGE

Glastonbury $749,000
Chef's style Kitchen w/ granite, stainless steel & more! Gorgeous back yard. 2nd floor Master Suite. 4 beds; 3.1 beds; 3841 sq. ft.

46 SMITHBROOK TERRACE

Glastonbury $479,900
Chic Glastonbury Ranch-style contemporary Home, with single floor living space - truly turn key. 4 beds; 2.2 baths; 2685 sq. ft.

113 MIDDLE HADDAM ROAD

Portland $649,900
Home in park-like setting of 34 acres, first-floor master suite includes a dressing room, his & her baths. 5 beds; 6 baths, 4412 sq. ft.

585 GOODALE HILL ROAD

Glastonbury $395,000
Contemporary home featuring open floor plan, indoor heated pool & a full walk out basement. 3 beds; 3 baths; 2566 sq. ft.

162 RIDGE ROAD

Glastonbury $650,000
Hartford skyline views just the beginning! Large kitchen, 1st floor bed/office, 2nd floor Master suite. 5 beds; 5 baths; 4795 sq. ft.

35 SENTINAL WOODS DRIVE

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51 LIBERTY DRIVE

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27 LAZY VALLEY ROAD

Glastonbury $699,900
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6 PENNY LANE

Manchester $560,900
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1328 DIAMOND LAKE ROAD

Glastonbury $425,000
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93 MOTT LANE

East Haddam $659,000
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36 FOUNDERS ROAD

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286 COLDBROOK ROAD

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113 COLTON ROAD

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59 KONGSCUT VALLEY TRAIL

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21 JONATHAN TRAIL

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125 JONATHAN TRAIL

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